

## Germany calls for EU meeting on Iraq aid

BONN (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer called Tuesday for a European Union (EU) conference to discuss the humanitarian situation in Iraq, ministry spokesman Martin Erdman said. Germany, which takes over as EU president for six months in January, aims to improve the living conditions of ordinary Iraqis who have suffered from international sanctions since the 1991 Gulf war. Fischer wants to show the people of Iraq that "there is light at the end of the tunnel" by offering medicine and food, Erdman said. Such an approach could help to isolate Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his regime, he added. European policy toward Iraq should aim at inspections of Iraqi weapons, more humanitarian aid and a possible progressive easing of sanctions, Erdman said, stressing that the last issue rested with the United Nations.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

## APU committee to convene in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The heads of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) will convene in Amman next week, an informed source said. The meeting will be held at the request of the Lower House of Parliament, which on Monday called for an emergency meeting of the APU to discuss the U.S.-U.K. attacks on Iraq. A statement issued by the House described the strikes as a dangerous precedent that violated the U.N. Charter and international law.

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## Russian envoy to U.S. to return Wednesday

MOSCOW (AFP) — Moscow moved to ease ties with Washington, strained by U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq, saying its ambassador to the United States would return Wednesday following his recall in protest at the attacks. President Boris Yeltsin ordered Yuri Yevstafeyev to return to Moscow for consultations last Thursday in an unprecedented display of anger over bombing raids to punish Baghdad's failure to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspections. Russia's envoy to London, Yuri Fokin, would also resume his duties once consultations with his superiors in Moscow were complete, said chief foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin, who declined to set a date.

## Islamists denies making threats

CAIRO (AP) — A militant Islamic group has denied reports that it threatened to bomb U.S. and Kuwaiti interests to avenge the American and British air strikes on Iraq, a leading Arab newspaper reported Tuesday. The London-based Al Hayat quoted sources close to Al Gamaa Al Islamiya, or the Islamic Group, as denying that its members contacted news organizations to threaten attacks. It was not immediately clear if the denial reflected a split in the leadership of the Islamic Group. In recent months, Egyptian leaders of the group have called for an end to violent activities here, but militants abroad have said the struggle should continue against the Egyptian government.

## First Palestinian Airlines plane lands in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — A Palestinian Airlines plane landed here on Tuesday on the first regularly scheduled flight from the new Gaza Strip airport to Cairo. Egyptian Transport Minister Suleiman Metwally was on hand to greet the plane, a Fokker 50. "I hope that Palestinian planes will be able to land at airports around the world bearing the name and flag of Palestine," he said. Palestinian Airlines plans to fly three times weekly between Cairo and Gaza, on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

## 50% of Israeli radio songs must now be Hebrew

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli parliament adopted a law Tuesday that one out of every two songs broadcast by public radio stations must be in Hebrew. The "defence of the Hebrew song" law set the quota to prevent radio stations being overwhelmed with English-language and other foreign songs. The law is intended to protect local musicians and songwriters whose abundant work is usually in Hebrew even if the songs themselves are of ancient origin or of Russian, Arab or Greek inspiration. Proposed by an opposition Labour Party MP, the bill has passed all three required readings in parliament.

# U.S. brandishes veto threat over sanctions on Iraq

## U.S. holds out prospect of more food for Iraq

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States threatened Tuesday to resort to its U.N. veto to block any easing of sanctions against Iraq that France, Russia and China have advocated as part of a new approach to Baghdad.

"We certainly oppose any effort to dismantle the sanctions regime and if it means using the veto we would," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart. The Defence Department meanwhile denied that it had fired at Iraq after the official Iraqi news agency reported that enemy warplanes had launched two missiles against southern Iraq.

"The report is inaccurate," said Lieutenant Colonel Pat Sivigny.

"No U.S. plane" has fired missiles, he said. Britain earlier also denied any involvement in the incident reported by Iraq.

The United States and Britain banded Iraq with missiles and bombs during four nights last week in an operation intended to deal a severe blow to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's military and security assets.

Operation Desert Fox was called off on Saturday after Washington and London said they had achieved their objective.

Within the U.N. Security Council however, the United States found itself at loggerheads with France, Russia and China which were pressing for an end to sanctions and to the U.N. arms inspection regime that have been the pillars of the

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States held out the possibility Tuesday of allowing Iraq to sell more oil on the world market to purchase food and medicine under a U.N. programme.

The move appeared to be aimed at addressing heightened concerns from France, Russia and China which are advocating an easing of sanctions as part of a new approach to Iraq in the wake of punishing air strikes.

"We are looking very much at the question of oil-for-food," said Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering, the administration's point man on Iraq. "There is a possibility of expanding it if the (U.N.) secretary general and his experts believe there is a need for expansion," he told reporters.

Under the U.N. oil-for-food programme, Iraq is allowed to sell \$5.2 billion in oil every six months to purchase food and medicine for Iraqis hard-hit by eight years of crippling economic sanctions.

U.N. approach to Iraq for nearly eight years.

"We believe that sanctions should be in place," said Lockhart, who also reiterated U.S. support for the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM).

"We believe UNSCOM is the best way to contain Saddam Hussein's ability to produce and deliver his weapons of mass destruction," he said.

France, Russia and China have expressed serious reservations over the role of UNSCOM chief Richard Butler and suspect him of setting the stage for a military confrontation by deliberately writing a negative report on Iraqi cooperation with the inspectors.

Meanwhile, President Bill Clinton's national security

adviser Sandy Berger was set to lay out U.S. policy on Iraq in an address in Washington on Wednesday, a White House official said.

Defence Secretary William Cohen meanwhile left here Tuesday for a three-day visit to the Gulf to visit U.S. servicemen during the Christmas holiday, the Pentagon said.

Cohen was expected to meet with the Kuwaiti emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, and visit some of the 5,000 U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait, diplomatic sources in Kuwait City said.

The United States currently has an estimated 24,100 military personnel in the Gulf, and an undisclosed number of aircraft at Ahmad Al Jaber airbase south of Kuwait City.

# Israeli prime ministerial candidates begin lining up

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Potential Israeli prime ministers from the left, right and centre began throwing their hats into the ring on Tuesday after the Knesset voted to hold early elections.

A head count by the Israeli media came up with the names of at least half-a-dozen pretenders for the direct election for prime minister which is expected to be held in late April.

While the May 1996 election, the first in which Israelis directly elected a premier, was a head-to-head battle between Shimon Peres on the left and Benjamin Netanyahu on the right, voters may have a greater choice this time.

According to the polls, the front runner is a man who has not yet formally announced his candidacy — General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, who is expected to announce the formation of a new centrist

## Jordan hopes early elections will not effect peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan hopes that the Middle East peace process will not be held hostage by internal political developments in Israel. "We hope that the peace process will continue, and that the move in Israel to hold early elections will not cause a delay in peace-making," Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib said Tuesday. Jordan is dealing with the government of Israel regardless of who is in power, Khatib told reporters at the prime ministry.

party in the next few days.

The 54-year-old former army chief of staff is leaving the military this week to enter the country's turbulent political waters for the first time.

Past attempts to create a third major party between the left-wing Labour and right-wing Likud have failed. In 1977, the centrist Dash won 15 seats in the Knesset but it quickly fell apart because of quarrelling within its ranks.

Labour, however, is urging Lipkin-Shahak to join its team under party leader and prime ministerial candidate Ehud Barak, himself a former chief of staff. The opinion polls show that Lipkin-Shahak would emerge on top in a race against Netanyahu while a contest between Barak and Netanyahu, who heads the Likud, would be close.

(Continued on page 12)

# Israeli-Palestinian peace process frozen as elections loom

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel reaffirmed Tuesday that there would be no further troop withdrawals from the West Bank for the time being, heightening fears that the peace process with the Palestinians would remain frozen until after upcoming elections.

"As long as the Palestinians do not respect their commitments, the current government will not carry out any withdrawals or release any new Palestinian prisoners," Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu's spokesman, Aviv Bushinsky, told AFP.

Bushinsky recalled that the government had approved on Sunday a list of five conditions which must be met by the Palestinians before it would carry out a second troop withdrawal called for under the Wye River peace agreement.

He added that the Israeli parliament's rejection of the conditions in a vote on Monday was "not relevant." Besides rejecting the conditions, the Knesset on Monday

also voted overwhelmingly to hold early elections, expected in April.

The onset of an election campaign threatens to freeze the already troubled peace process with the Palestinians until the formation of a new government.

The most likely date for the elections is seen as April 27, just a week ahead of the day Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has threatened to declare an independent Palestinian state.

Although Netanyahu will



U.N. humanitarian aid workers Tuesday load cars with luggage before leave Amman to Baghdad to resume work. The workers had left the Iraqi capital on Friday, the second day of the U.S.-U.K. air strikes on Iraq (see story on page 12) (photo by Yusef 'Allan)

# Jordan supports summit over Iraq

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — Jordan said Tuesday it supported a call to convene an Arab League summit over the U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq last week.

But officials privately ruled out prospects of holding such a meeting because of objection from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Iraq's fiercest foes since the Gulf crisis, sparked by Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

"It seems that the prospects of convening such a summit are not too high due to the eight-year Arab conflict over the Gulf War," an Arab diplomat said Tuesday.

"Jordan always support calls for holding an Arab summit and is ready to participate in any Arab meeting for the benefit of the Arab World," Information Minister

Nasser Judeh told the Jordan Times.

"But we believe such a summit needs a clear agenda in order to guarantee that it would achieve its aspired goals and objectives," he added.

Judeh was speaking a day after Esmat Abdul Meguid, the head of the 22-member Arab League, began consulting Arab foreign ministers on Yemen's request to convene a summit over the four-day punitive air strikes that injured and killed scores of Iraqis.

The summit would be the first since June 1996, shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was elected to office, sparking fears among Arabs that the peace process would be set back.

Trad Fayeze, Jordan's ambassador to Egypt and to

the Cairo-based Arab League, told his colleagues on Monday that Jordan had long backed the idea of a summit and any efforts that help restore inter-Arab unity, weakened by the 1990-91 Gulf War.

Yemen's envoy to the Arab League on Monday handed his colleagues an official Yemeni invitation for the convening of the summit to discuss the situation in Iraq, diplomats said.

The letters were signed by Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

One diplomat said Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, consulted with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, whose country is heading the Arab summit since 1996.

"More such consultations with other Arab leaders will

be made in the coming few days," he told the Jordan Times.

In addition to Jordan, representatives from Morocco, Algeria, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have expressed support for holding an Arab summit.

"If summits are not now, when are they going to be held," the diplomat quoted the representatives of Sudan and Algeria as telling their colleagues on Monday.

Many Arab League officials, including Abdel Meguid, have denied speculation that the summit was being used as an excuse to mask weak reaction by Arab governments to the military strikes against Iraq which sparked angry public protests throughout the Arab World.

(Continued on page 12)

# Lebanese woman, six children killed in Israeli bombing

BAALBEK (AFP) — A Lebanese woman and her six children were killed on Tuesday in an Israeli air raid near Baalbek in eastern Lebanon and three other civilians were wounded, police said.

The woman, Nadwa Othman, 35, and her six children — three boys and three girls aged 1 to 16 years old — died in the Israeli raid, which took place in an area under Syrian control, the police said.

The Israeli military expressed regret for the deaths. "A building was hit by mistake during the attack, and we

regret the loss of civilians," a military spokesman said.

Israeli aircraft were aiming at a Hizbollah training camp and radio transmitter, he said.

Sources close to the Hizbollah guerrilla group said an eighth civilian also died in the raid. Hizbollah radio, the Voice of the Oppressed, said the husband and father of the six children, Mohammad Othman, and son Ala had survived what it described as a "Zionist massacre."

(Continued on page 12)

# Tarawneh responds to House call for ending Iraq sanctions today

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — The government is expected today to respond to Lower House of Parliament demand to unilaterally lift economic sanctions on Baghdad and expel the envoys of Israel, the United States and Britain in protest against last week's U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq, officials said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Fayeze Tarawneh is expected to present the government response to the House's letter that was submitted by Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali, on Monday. Information Minister Nasser Judeh said.

During Sunday's session Majali led 53 deputies in condemning the strikes against Iraq and in demanding that Arab states rally behind Iraq and in order to end the U.N.-imposed sanctions on the country.

One deputy after another took to the podium to voice their condemnation of the attacks that killed civilians and demanded that Arab parliaments force their governments to take a joint stand against Washington and London and work in unison towards ending the sanctions on Iraq as well as Libya and Sudan.

Noting that the strikes against Iraq followed eight

years of sanctions that crippled the Arab state, Majali said there is urgent need for the deputies and their counterparts in the Arab World to express the Arab people's sentiments and work towards ending the Iraqi people's suffering.

On Monday, the House recommended that the country lift the economic embargo on Iraq, and called on other Arab governments to do the same.

The call Monday by Jordan's 80-member Lower House was largely a gesture. It would have to be approved by the Senate, the Cabinet and then the King.

Judeh refused to give details about the content of today's government response, but stressed that the deputies' views are respected since they represent the people.

"The Parliament, which represents the people, is an independent authority, and the government respects its recommendations," said Judeh. However, he pointed out that the government is responsible for taking executive decisions. "Decisions related to foreign ties or to relations with international organisations come under the government's responsibility," Judeh said. He added that "however, the Parliament has the authority to question the government."



## Britain claims Iraq civilian casualties hit by friendly fire

LONDON (AFP) — Britain suggested Tuesday that while there are no figures for civilian casualties from U.S.-led air and missile strikes on Iraq, some may have been killed by 'friendly fire' from Iraqi guns.

Defence spokesman Edgar Buckley told a press conference here: "Of course we made every effort to avoid civilian casualties but you will all have seen pictures from Baghdad."

"The Iraqis themselves were putting up a great amount of anti-aircraft fire into the sky and that, of course, has to come down somewhere. And the effects of that sort of activity will inevitably produce some civilian casualties."

Buckley went on to claim that he only expected civilian deaths or injuries among "people who were inside military buildings we were attacking."

One example of "likely"

casualties included night cleaners, he said, adding that such casualties were "inevitable."

Air Marshall Sir John Day added "we deeply regret any loss of civilian life" but London believed this was kept to a minimum.

"We don't have any more details of specific casualties. I'm not sure we will ever have the full facts. As far as we know, and as far as the Americans know, there were no weapons which struck civilian targets." He warned that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would manipulate such statistics.

Day also stressed that as well as minimising "collateral damage", "this attack was conducted in such a way as to minimise risk of damage to the environment through oil leaks."

After meeting his German counterpart Rudolf Scharping,

British Defence Secretary George Robertson spoke at a separate press conference.

He said: "Whereas life appears to be going around as normal inside Iraq, inside the military structures there has been immense damage and the impact has been very considerable indeed."

He claimed 12 American cruise missiles had hit the ruling Baath party headquarters. "That was one of the mechanisms by which Saddam controlled his chemical and biological weapons programme. We know that because he refused to allow the inspectors access. It will not be able to do that probably ever again."

Sharping said Bonn supported Britain and the U.S. because "military action, regrettably, was necessary" and called Saddam Hussein a "political gangster".

Turning to Iraqi claims that

enemy warplanes fired two missiles in southern Iraq Tuesday, Day said Operation Southern Watch patrolling no-fly zones over Iraq had resumed. Buckley added that U.S. and British aircraft were entitled to fire back when threatened by missiles from the ground.

"It is quite conceivable that something like this could happen in the future or could happen today. At present we cannot confirm that it did happen today."

Day also repeated that Iraq's suspected programme of chemical and biological weapons had been put back "at least a year" by the strikes.

He said 74 per cent of targets had been destroyed, 11 per cent suffered slight damage and 15 per cent had been missed completely.

"Clearly we are very pleased with these results," he said.



Iraqi women walk beside a banner that reads 'Sanctions: the weapon that keeps killing' in front of the trade ministry building in Baghdad Tuesday. More than 60 soldiers were killed during the four-day airstrikes campaign by U.S. and British forces last week. No figures of civilian casualties have been released so far (AP Photo)

## Ali Sa'd recovering at hospital from heart problems

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The chairman and director general of the Jordan Tobacco Company, held last week for questioning in connection with a JD15 million alleged embezzlement from the firm, has been admitted to hospital after suffering heart problems, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

Ali Fareed Sa'd, recovering at the army-run heart centre of the Royal Medical Services, was expected to leave the hospital in the next three days after completing the needed tests.

"He is in stable condition," said one doctor supervising him.

Jweidah jail officials rushed Sa'd to the state-run Al Bashir Hospital on Sunday after suffering from heart problems.

He was later moved to the Royal Medical Services "for better observation," his lawyer, Saleh Jeirudy, told the Jordan Times.

The prosecutor general ordered the arrest of Sa'd and 12 other employees of the debt-ridden tobacco company and demanded they be held in custody at the Jweidah prison for 14 days pending the investigation. The Court of First Instance last week refused to release Sa'd on bail.

"We have no plans to make another request to release him on bail," Jeirudy said.

So far, no charges have been pressed against Sa'd, one of the biggest shareholders in Jordan's oldest tobacco company.

Fathaleh Emrani, Vice President of the Jordan Trade Union and a member

of the company's board of directors, said the alleged fraud was discovered by an auditor appointed by the new management to verify the company's records.

The crisis flared after the Arab Bank filed a lawsuit against the tobacco company for defaulting on a JD5.5 million loan. The Ministry of Industry and Trade dissolved the company's board of directors and appointed a special committee, comprising representatives of the private and the public sectors, to manage the troubled company.

According to company records, the 67-year-old firm's indebtedness to local banks stands at around JD22 million.

## 1999 will be 'bleak' for Sudan — aid agencies

NAIROBI (AFP) — Aid agencies working in Sudan warned Tuesday that 1999 would be a "bleak" year for more than four million civilians who suffered this year from famine, fighting and flooding.

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), an umbrella group for United Nations and other agencies, said in a statement that a reversion to acute famine in the southern Bahr El Ghazal region could not be ruled out, and that the Western Upper Nile region, also in the south, could suffer "acute conditions" as a result of flooding and civil war.

Lack of food is killing 15 people a day in one southern province, Pibor, the Al Rai Al Aam newspaper reported Tuesday, adding that diseases such as tuberculosis are common in the area, where local officials have appealed for provisions.

The U.N. World Food programme estimates that more than two million people will need to be fed through to October next year, the OLS statement said.

"Operation Lifeline Sudan's 1998 annual needs assessment warns of a bleak year ahead for more than four million Sudanese

who have suffered from famine, fighting and flooding during 1998. "... those living in Bahr Al Ghazal and Upper Nile regions in the south and in the north's Kassala region are particularly vulnerable and will need assistance."

The statement said that flooding in some areas in late 1998 was the worst in 50 years and led to contamination of water sources and increased incidences of such illnesses as malaria and diarrhoea.

In northern Sudan, it said, humanitarian needs could increase in the Kassala region, near the border with Eritrea. People there had limited access to food, it said, and insecurity could continue in 1999.

It urged an extension of a ceasefire between Khartoum government troops and southern rebels in Bahr El Ghazal which is due to expire on January 15.

The rebels in the Sudan People's Liberation Army have been fighting for more than 15 years for greater autonomy of the largely Christian and animist black south from the Arabised, Islamic north.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Arab interior ministers meet Jan. 29

AMMAN (Petra) — The Interior Ministry Tuesday sent invitations to Arab interior ministers to attend annual meetings of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, set to be held in Amman on Jan. 29.

#### 18 Palestinian technicians graduate

AMMAN (Petra) — Eighteen electricity technicians from "Palestine" Tuesday graduated from the National Electricity Company (NEC) after completing a three-month-old training course, organised by the company in cooperation with the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JAICA). The graduation ceremony was attended by NEC Director General Waddah Nabulsi.

#### House committee reviews draft budget

AMMAN (Petra) — The Finance Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Tuesday discussed the draft budget law for 1999 and examined means of increasing tourism revenues and future plans to attract more tourists. The committee also discussed road construction priorities for 1999, several projects to be carried out by the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, and future plans to increase budget revenues. The meeting, headed by committee Chairman Ali Abul Ragheb, was attended by Ministers of Post and Telecommunications, Public Works and Housing and Tourism and Antiquities.

#### Three dead in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Suspected Islamic extremists in Algeria have killed at least three people since the start of Ramadan, a fasting period deemed propitious for jihad, or holy war, press reports said Tuesday. The throat of a young soldier was cut at a fake checkpoint on a main road some 120 kilometers southeast of the capital, according to Le Soir D'Algerie. Manned by armed Islamic fighters and often set up between real military controls, fake checkpoints are the bane of motorists in Algeria. The same paper reported the body of an unidentified civilian, also with his throat cut, was found in a housing estate in the town of Bouira.

#### Palestinian journalists hold 'press freedom' protest

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian journalists held a sit-in Tuesday in front of the legislative council headquarters in Gaza City to protest against the imposition of press restrictions on colleagues and their detention last week. Some 50 journalists held up banners saying "freedom of the press" and "our place isn't in prison," witnesses said, adding that they were joined by more than 100 representatives of various political groups.

## Iranian president captures hearts and minds of Iranian women

TEHRAN (AP) — When 17-year-old Maryam Oni found President Mohammad Khatami standing next to her at a recent book fair, she broke into tears.

"I felt I was under a tremendous force... an attraction," she said.

Oni is not alone in her feelings. In Iran, not only Leonardo DiCaprio and Iranian movie actors are gaining a big female following.

"I simply adore him."

said Golnaz Sajadi, 20, a university student. "He's so bright and clean, and attractive."

The attraction is tempered by Khatami's role as a Shiite Muslim cleric, however. As Sarah Taghani, another student, put it: "I just want to kiss him — like a father."

And it's not only the hearts of women that Khatami has captured, but also the minds of women and men alike, particularly the young — some of

whom even carry his photo in their wallets.

Indeed, Khatami's election victory — he won 20 million votes to 10 million for a hard-line rival in May 1997 — was built on youth and women.

Perhaps what appeals to many about the 53-year-old Khatami is how different he is — in looks and ideas — from the more severe demeanour of most Iranian clerics.

What sets him apart are

his pleasant smile and fastidious grooming — his trimmed greying beard, the well pressed clerical robe carefully matched with flowing cloak, his well-shined shoes.

Khatami's sister-in-law, Zahra Eshraqi, says Khatami is so obsessed with tidiness that he nags TV camera crews not to wrinkle his robe when they put a microphone on him.

Eshraqi calls Khatami's looks cosy. "His face is

pleasant to look at. It's close to the heart."

It helps Khatami's popularity, too, that he says what many Iranians have long wanted to hear, promising freedom and civil rights.

As the head of the National Library, Khatami spent six years studying and lecturing about a different kind of Islam — which reconciles Islamic law and tradition with individual freedom, and with Western ideas like the rule of law.

He has published two books. "Fear of the Wave" examines Shiite reformers who sought to reinterpret Islamic law according to their own times. "From the World of the City to the City of the World" is a long rumination on Western political thought.

"He knows how to speak well when he travels abroad. He makes us proud of him," said Taghani, the university student.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"  
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left  
16:00 French Documentary  
16:30 (Ch. 2 links with Ch. 1)  
17:00 French programme  
18:15 Omar Ben Abdul Aziz  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 Words of Wisdom  
19:30 News headlines  
19:35 Comedy — 2 Point 4 Children  
20:00 Islam in a Changing World  
20:30 Drama — NYPD Blue  
21:15 The Great Moments of Science and Technology  
21:30 Faces and Places  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Cover Story  
23:10 The Album Show  
23:59 End of T.X.

#### PRAYER TIMES

05:05 Fajr  
06:28 (Sunrise) Dhuha  
11:35 Dhuhur  
14:19 Asr  
16:41 Maghrib  
18:04 'Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeth, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4532785  
St. Joseph Church Tel.  
4624590

### JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

#### Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366

#### Anglican Church Tel.

4624853/4624811

#### St. Aftem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel.

4771751

#### Amman International Church Tel.

5865897

#### German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel.

5688404

#### The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel.

5811295

#### Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel.

4654932

#### St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel.

5661757

#### Church of the Annunciation Tel.

4637440

#### Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4646138

#### Church of Presentation, Sweifeth Tel.

5920146

#### The United Catholic Church Tel.

4624757

#### The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel.

4614190

#### Evangelical Free Church Tel.

4892679

#### The Baptist Church Tel.

4628052

#### The Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

4771331

#### The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.

4775261

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts

of the Kingdom. Temperatures are expected to drop and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

#### Amman

05/15

#### Aqaba

10/21

#### Deserts

03/16

#### Jordan Valley

11/22

#### Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 16, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

#### Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 03/11

Jerash 10/17

Um Qays 06/16

Madaba 04/15

Petra 04/16

Dead Sea 11/24

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Awai Hawamdeh 5332350

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain 4623029

Dr. Ghalib Zawalidh 4126011

Dr. Khalidoun Asfour 5332600

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy 5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730  
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004  
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

#### IRBID:

Dr. Ali Shuqairi 0217100069

Fou'ad Pharmacy 021275360

#### ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad 09985550

Palestine Pharmacy 09983562

#### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Fire Brigade 4671701

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53300

#### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7

Husseini Medical Centre 5856856

Luzmila 4630195

Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6

Alkileh Maternity 4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine Shmeisum 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5607431

Jordan Hospital 5607550

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4896111/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5157100

Amal Hospital 5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

#### ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

0998333/3

Zarqa National Hospital

09900560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

09990990

#### IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

021275555

Roman Catholic Hospital

021272275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital  
0217101372 0217103101  
Rosary Sisters Hospital  
0217102831 0217102011  
Specialty Hospital



## Prince Ali turns 23 today

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ali, son of His Majesty King Hussein and the late Queen Alia, today celebrates his 23rd birthday.

He received his elementary, junior and secondary education at the Islamic Scientific College, the American School and the International Baccalaureate school in Amman.

He obtained his high school degree from Salisbury School in the United States in June 1993 and joined Saadhurst Military College in the United Kingdom a year later.

He won the Brunei Medal of Distinction and graduated with honours before joining the Jordanian army's special forces.

He has attended several military training courses, including ones in diving and free fall jumping.

In September 1995, Prince Ali was admitted to



Princeton University and later to Columbia University in the U.S., where he studied political science and history.

Prince Ali is the honorary president of the

Prince Ali Club for the Deaf and Mute. He is also president of the Royal Jordanian Paratroopers Club and the Al Jeel al Jadeed Club.

## Three European messengers of peace leave for Jerusalem

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Two Italians and a Spaniard travelling on foot from Rome to Jerusalem with a message of peace, left Amman for the West Bank on Tuesday, the last leg of a tour to discover the route used by Christian pilgrims decades ago.

Luigi Ciazzioli, 40, and 35-year-old Pedro Rogas from Madrid, were joined in Syria by Ambrogio Rampini 63, who travelled from Damascus on a bicycle.

Ciazzioli and Rogas, who started the first such reported trip on July 31, told journalists late on Monday they hoped to return to their countries by year-end.

The three wanderers, expected to arrive in Jerusalem on Wednesday, are members of a European society seeking to rediscover the route used by Christian pilgrims in the middle ages as well as promoting religious and touristic awareness among European Christians.

"We decided to organise a long journey between Rome and Jerusalem to trace the link between the two important cities," said Ciazzioli.

"We walked around 4,000 kilometres, passing through 10 major cities and 40 towns in Italy, Turkey, Syria and Jordan," said Ciazzioli, Vice-President of Italy's National Centre for Tracking Documentation.

The trip is part of celebrations organised by the Rome-based group to mark the end of the second millennium.

Ciazzioli and Rogas, who walked a average 30-kilometres a day, used to spend the night at private homes or in churches and shelters.

## Princess Basma launches annual Ramadan charity campaign

GHOR SAFI (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, president of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), Tuesday launched an annual Ramadan charity campaign to raise cash and in-kind donations for needy Jordanians.

The Princess launched the QAF-sponsored campaign during a visit to Ghor Safi in southern Jordan where she chaired a meeting of the Fund's higher committee in charge of conducting and supervising the campaign throughout the Muslim's Holy Month of Ramadan.

The committee discussed the 30-day plans and activities, reviewed the list of names of poor families and plans to visit these families.

Princess Basma underlined the need for the committee to reach the poor in their homes and to decide on the type of aid they need.

The Princess and committee members were briefed about the aid distribution process and the type of assistance given to needy people in the southern Jordan Valley region.

Nearly 750 local and needy families living in the Ghor Safi, Ghor Mazraa, Ghor Haditha, Ghor Assal, Fafa and Mamourieh received help



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, president of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, Tuesday inspected living conditions of a number of families in Ghor Safi. During her visit, the Princess launched an annual Ramadan charity campaign aims at raising cash and in-kind donations for needy Jordanians.

from the Fund on Tuesday.

QAF teams, working in conjunction with local voluntary groups, supervise the distribution of aid to the poor in their respective regions while collecting contributions.

Princess Basma inspected the process of offering free medical services to the local community by specialists and doctors from the Hashemite

medical team who carried out examinations on 180 cases and referred some of them to the local hospitals.

The Princess later called at the homes of a number of families in Ghor Safi and enquired about their conditions. She saw some children who dropped out from school because of their family's limited income and instructed

local officials to take measures to ensure they continue their education.

Princess Basma and the committee were also briefed on the region's needs based on field studies that examined the area's economic and social situation.

She said any future development plans should be based on these studies.

## Arabia. On. Line launches 'Ramadan' site

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arabia. On. Line on Tuesday officially launched its "Arabia Ramadan" site, offering information and entertainment in English and Arabic to Arab and foreign Internet surfers.

In addition to its intricate design, influenced by Islamic ornaments, new sections that were not available last year were added to this year's site, the company said in a statement.

Visitors will be able to explore the magnificence of selected Muslim cities and to get to know some of Islam's most important figures. Visitors will also find Koranic verses and sayings of Prophet Mohammad referring to Ramadan and its spiritual meanings, it

added. Arabia. On. Line's designers have included a collection of special Ramadan greeting cards, which can be sent free of charge using the electronic mail.

To complete the joy of Ramadan, visitors will be rewarded with valuable prizes if they provide correct answers for all Ramadan competition quizzes, which will be updated daily.

Because the site is devoted to all family members, a special recipe section featuring delicious dishes from all over the Muslim World has been added. The recipes will be updated regularly to include dishes from various Islamic countries.

Muslims will also find a

special page allocated to prayer time schedules to enable them determine the exact time for breakfasting from anywhere in the world.

They can also benefit from the huge amount of Islamic information in the Internet through special links provided in a special page.

Ramadan site can be visited from the main page of Arabia. On. Line: www.arabia.com

Established in 1995, Arabia. On. Line claims it is the biggest and most popular service catering for Arab audience inside and outside the region, as well as an international audience with interest in the Arab World.

## Court sentences man to life for killing wife, 4 children

By Rama Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has ratified a three-month-old Criminal Court ruling sentencing a 40-year-old man to life in jail after finding him guilty of killing his wife and four children in Karak last May, judicial sources said Tuesday.

On Sept. 7, the Criminal Court sentenced Awad Mohammad to life imprisonment on five counts of manslaughter after accusing him of killing his 35-year-old wife and four of his six children on May 13, 1987.

He had claimed he killed them to "cleanse his honour" as he suspected the children were not his.

But the court rejected these

claims on grounds testimonies given by his children and genetic tests conducted on them contradicted his allegations.

The victims included his wife Samar Salah, and his four children: Ahmad, seven, Basma, six, Sahar, one, and four-month-old Ibrahim.

The Criminal Court changed the original count of premeditated murder, which could have carried the death penalty, to manslaughter.

"It was clear to the court that Mohammad shot his family after quarrelling with his wife," the court stated.

Mohammad was also convicted of attempted manslaughter, threatening the life of his daughter Nermeen and possession of an unlicensed gun.

According to the prosecution

charge sheet, the defendant plotted to kill his wife and children "because he suspected that the children were not his."

On the night of the incident, Mohammad claimed that a stranger knocked on the door of the family's home late at night. The man fled after Mohammad opened the door.

Mohammad later locked up his wife and six children, drew a gun he had purchased a few months before the incident, and shot the five at close range, the sheet said.

Friends and relatives of the defendant told the Jordan Times shortly after the incident that Mohammad, an Aqaba-based taxi driver, could not cope with his financial problems and hence decided to kill his family.

Genetic tests performed on the victims proved that the children were his.

Mohammad's mother-in-law also testified in court that her daughter was frequently "assaulted by her husband and that he had threatened to kill her."

Mohammad also shot his four-year-old daughter Rasha, but neighbours later found her alive and rushed her to the Karak Government Hospital.

His eight-year-old daughter, Nermeen, who hid inside a bedroom closet during the attack, was found in a state of shock, the neighbours said.

Mohammad's two other children from a previous marriage were visiting their divorced mother in the Jordan Valley at the time of the murders.

## Gulf returnees compensation bureau continues strike

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Staff at a bureau in charge of seeking U.N. compensation for Jordanians forced to flee Kuwait after the 1990 Gulf crisis continued their strike for the second day running on Tuesday to improve working conditions.

"We will only end the strike when our full demands are met," said one of the 13 men and women employed at the bureau.

The staff want to end the Labour Ministry's alleged five-year-long interference in the office's operations and demand a clear budget to ensure its continued operations.

The penniless non-governmental organisation has been working with a bare minimum

of funds for the last two years because the government has failed to earmark allocations for its operations, the staff said.

The Labour Ministry and the NGO have been engaged in a dispute for years over who has the right to seek compensation claims for more than 300,000 Jordanian returnees.

Labour Ministry officials were not available for comment. Meanwhile, Yahya Utaibi, head of the bureau, told the Jordan Times on Tuesday he had requested a meeting with Labour Minister Mohammad Mahdi Farhan to discuss the issue.

The decision to start an open-ended strike on Monday took Utaibi by surprise as he had just come back from a 17-day trip to Switzerland for talks with the

Geneva-based U.N. Compensation Committee.

Local investors seeking U.N. compensation through the bureau fear the strike would hit them hardest as it will paralyse all communications with the United Nations.

This, in turn, would further postpone hefty compensation requests made by 1,706 returnees from the U.N., already delayed because some ministry and NGO workers provided some incomplete information on 1,365 requests, some said.

The 1,706 returnees, seeking compensation estimated at \$1.6 billion, are among the last to receive their dues from the U.N. fund, whose revenues come from limited Iraqi oil sales under the oil-for-food deal approved by the United Nations in 1996.

Many of the other Jordanian returnees have already been compensated by the fund, including those who incurred losses, some of which were over \$100,000, because of the crisis, sparked by Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Investors claimed that red tape was holding up around \$300,000 in interest on \$125 million transferred by the U.N. fund to the government months ago while the NGO did not have money to run its day-to-day affairs. Many of the returnees, including affluent businessmen, Kuwaiti government employees, teachers and bankers, were forced to flee Kuwait after Iraq's invasion. Others were evicted by Kuwait after the U.S.-led military forces liberated the emirate.

## Unions urge doctors, pharmacies to boycott American, British drugs

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The associations of doctors and pharmacists Tuesday urged their members to boycott British and U.S. drugs in protest against 70-hours of air strikes launched by Washington and London against Iraq last week.

Abdul Rahim Issa, head of the Jordan Pharmacists Association, and Bassem Dajani, head of the Jordan Medical Association, said their union asked pharmacists and doctors to blacklist all U.S. and British-made medicine.

But the drugs will be exempt from the unprecedented boycott if no alternative product was available.

"We will continue our boy-

cott as long as the crisis between Iraq, the U.S. and Britain continues," Dajani told the Jordan Times.

Unionists said the boycott could affect sales of the controversial impotency drug Viagra, produced by American company, Pfizer, when it arrives on Jordanian pharmacy shelves soon after the Health Ministry approved the drug's registration last week.

The two unions have launched a vocal media campaign to promote the rejection of U.S. and British drugs which represent 15 to 20 per cent of Jordan's \$110 million annual medicine imports.

Issa dismissed speculation that the decision to boycott American and British manufacturers of medicine would

have a negative impact on the needs of Jordanian patients.

"Local and foreign alternatives to the American and British drugs are available and some U.S. and British medicines would be exempt from the boycott if no local alternative is available," he said.

Jordanians from all walks of life have staged peaceful demonstrations to protest the U.S.-led strikes against Iraq, launched in the early hours of Thursday and ordered suspended on Saturday.

In a related development, Husni Abu Gheida, head of the 35,000-strong Engineers Association, said on Tuesday that the union would send a delegation to Iraq to assess damages inflicted on build-

ings and roads in the four-night attack.

"The association's general assembly formed a special committee of members with different engineering specialisations, to estimate the damage and help find ways to support the Iraqi people in their efforts to re-build their nation," he said.

The delegation, expected to travel to Baghdad soon, will take some food and medicine donated by Jordanians under a nation-wide campaign launched by the 13 professional associations, long a hot-bed of pro-Iraqi political activism.

## Japan grants \$83,333 for mobile clinic to serve badia region, remote areas

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — Japan on Tuesday agreed to grant the Princess Basma Society for Social Development in Subha \$83,333 to finance the purchase of a mobile clinic to improve health services in the badia and other remote Jordanian areas.

The grant agreement was signed by Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Koichi Matsumoto and society president Nimer Fawaz at Tokyo's mis-

sion in Amman. The grant is part of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP) programme to help governmental and non-governmental organisations, research centres, hospitals and local communities across the Kingdom.

A total of \$2.98 million has been dispersed so far under the five-year-old GAGP, with emphasis on areas of primary health care, poverty, relief, basic job training, women in

development projects, the environment, primary education and assistance for the disabled.

The mobile clinic, which includes a complete dental unit, ECG, nebuliser, an ultrasound unit and oxygen resuscitator, will cover all regions of the badia.

"...this donation is a demonstration of Japan's commitment to assist the Jordanian community in all aspects, whether at the official or the NGO level," said

Matsumoto. Japanese volunteers working under the GAGP vowed to make the latest project a success.

"We are very happy to be in this programme and we hope it will be a success," said Noriko Iwashima, a volunteer nurse at the state-run Mafraq hospital in north east Jordan.

Mid-wife Kimie Saito, another volunteer, said the latest grant will help make their job easier.

### THE NIGHTS OF RAMADAN FESTIVAL

\* French film "Nelly at M. Amad" (sponsored by the French Cultural Centre) at Cinema Philadelphia at 8:00 p.m.

### POETRY FESTIVAL

\* Poetry festival (with the par-

### What's going on

icipation of several poets) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday Dec. 24 at 8:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian,

Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.

\* Exhibition of Nabatean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagra Street, until Dec. 31 (Tel. 5699141/2).

### "The Warm Winner"

works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.

\* The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2, until Jan. 28.

# Milosevic backs down, allows U.S. envoy to stay

**BELGRADE (AP)** — NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia remain an option even though Belgrade has reversed its order to expel the American head of Kosovo's international monitors, a senior diplomat said Friday.

"The NATO activation order is still there to threaten, and I think President (Slobodan) Milosevic understands that very well," said Knut Vollebaek, Norway's foreign minister and head of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which runs the monitoring operation.

"I hope we can start a political process so we can avoid any kind of airstrike," he told reporters before departing for Pristina, Kosovo's capital.

Faced with a threat of NATO military action, the Yugoslav government late Friday reversed its decision to expel chief monitor William Walker.

The move came hours after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned that the entire 750-person monitoring team would be pulled out of Kosovo unless Milosevic allows Walker to remain.

A removal of the monitors probably would spell the end of the tottering ceasefire between Milosevic's forces and ethnic Albanian separatists and pave the way for NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia.

The decision sets aside the standoff over Walker but by no means signals an end to the crisis in Kosovo, an ethnic-Albanian majority province in Serbia, the main republic in

Yugoslavia.

Serb sources in Kosovo reported Friday that five Serb civilians in Nevojlani, some 30 kilometres north-west of Pristina, were kidnapped overnight by rebel Kosovo Liberation Army. There were no details.

Up to 2,000 people have been killed in fighting during the past year in Kosovo. Ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of the province's 2 million people, and most want independence.

In the past week, NATO planes have gone on alert for possible strikes against Yugoslavia, following the discovery of 45 bodies of ethnic Albanian massacre victims. Yugoslav forces have continued an offensive in the province and prevented the U.N. war crimes tribunal from investigating the massacre in Racak.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James Rubin said suspension of the expulsion order was not enough "to resolve the problems that President Milosevic has created." He said the United States and NATO still insist that the monitors be allowed to operate independently, that Yugoslavia comply with Yugoslav army withdrawals called for in an October peace agreement and permit an investigation by the U.N. war crimes court of the Racak massacre.

Vollebaek spoke of "some movement" in getting the Yugoslavs to allow the Hague tribunal to investigate the massacre, which led to the latest crisis. Vollebaek said he had spoken to the chief prosecutor Louise Arbour since his

meeting with Milosevic, but refused to elaborate.

He called for intense international diplomatic activity over Kosovo, saying a meeting of foreign ministers of the so-called Contact Group of countries involved in the Kosovo crisis might be held soon. A lower-level meeting was being held in London Friday.

Vollebaek and U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, who met Milosevic for several hours Thursday, both described the talks as "rather difficult."

U.S. spokesman James Pardee told The Associated Press that after more than four hours of talks, Milosevic remained "inflexible on all key compliance issues and continues to deny Serbian involvement in the Racak massacre."

Walker had been ordered to leave Yugoslavia by Thursday after he accused Serb police of carrying out the Racak killings. As talks went on in Belgrade, Walker defied the order and remained holed up in his office in Pristina.

In her comments in Washington, Albright demanded that Milosevic back down "by complying with U.N. resolutions, reducing the Serb security presence, cooperating with the War Crimes Tribunal and permitting the verification mission, including Ambassador Walker, to operate unhindered."

Five Finnish forensic experts unconnected to the tribunal have been allowed to examine bodies. They began work Thursday at Pristina's morgue.



Author Salman Rushdie (right) is kissed by the French Ancien Ministre Monsieur Jack Lang. The French minister presented Rushdie with the prestigious French literary award the Insignes de Commandeur des Arts et Lettres in recognition of his work as an author (Reuters photo)

## Foreigners flee Indonesian spice islands

**JAKARTA (R)** — Terrified foreigners fled Indonesia's spice islands Friday after Muslim-Christian fighting killed at least 43 people and heightened religious tensions threatening to tear the nation apart.

The 40 mostly American and British Bible translators fled into the northern Australian city of Darwin, saying the violence on the island of Ambon, 2,300 km east of Jakarta, had made it too dangerous to stay.

"There was rioting, there was burning, there was looting. People died," one told Australian Broadcasting Corp television.

"We decided it was best to get out... while we still could." In Jakarta, President B.J. Habibie pleaded for unity.

"It is very important to keep unity in this reform era," he told reporters. "We must not fall into the trap of rumours that could pit one race, religion and ethnic group against another."

"God willing, this incident could serve as a lesson to increase our awareness, not our prejudice." Armed forces chief General Wiranto and police chief Lieutenant-General Roessmanhadi flew to Ambon to meet local leaders and bring food supplies for 3,000 residents still sheltering in police and military compounds.

Police say 43 people died and dozens were seriously wounded over the past week in the bloodiest violence since May riots in Jakarta killed almost 1,200 people and helped force autocratic President Suharto from

power.

Several mosques and churches and almost 100 homes were torched in Ambon and neighbouring islands in the Moluccas after fighting began when a drunken man tried to extort money from a bus driver.

Television reports said the flag of the separatist Republic of South Moluccas was raised in the rioting. Police denied this.

The mainly Christian city of Ambon was quiet Friday. A curfew is in place and provincial military chief Major-General Amir Sembiring appealed to religious leaders to maintain calm.

Muslims held Friday prayers in mosques under tight security. "The situation here is like after a war," Reverend Frans Lutherus told Reuters by telephone from Ambon. "Ambon is very tense and... you can see people brandishing spears and daggers."

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation, but there are millions of Christians, Hindus and Buddhists.

Ethnic and religious tensions suppressed during Suharto's harsh 32-year rule have bubbled to the surface as the country grapples with political and economic turmoil and the military and police struggle to maintain order.

Despite sometimes violent protests seeking political reform and the economic meltdown that has thrown millions into poverty, some analysts and commentators say religious friction is the greatest threat confronting Indonesia.

"Of all the tensions that arose as a consequence of so many competing claims after the downfall of the Suharto regime, religious strife may be said to constitute one of the gravest dangers to the cohesion of the Indonesian state," Friday's English-language Indonesian Observer said in an editorial.

"The tragedy of Ambon may well further the spread and penetration of the disintegration process," Catholic sociologist Father Franz Magnis Suseno told Reuters the image of religious harmony during Suharto's rule was a sham.

"The situation is very worrying — if it can happen in the Moluccas, it could happen anywhere," Abdurrahman Wahid, who leads Indonesia's largest Muslim group, said people had lost respect for the military and Habibie's eight-month-old government.

"What starts as an insignificant misunderstanding can flare into bloody clashes. The situation is quite acute because people have become so easily agitated," he said.

Concerns over the violence in Ambon and sporadic clashes around the country sent shivers through the foreign exchange market Friday, sending the rupiah tumbling towards 9,000 to the dollar compared with 8,600/8,700 late Thursday.

The stock market is closed until Monday.

The official Antara news agency also said Friday a youth died when small-scale rioting hit two central Java towns Wednesday and Thursday.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### EU mulls visa ban on Belgrade, Serb governments

**BRUSSELS (AFP)** — European Union governments are considering banning all members of the governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Serbia from their territories in a bid to step up the pressure on Belgrade to end the crisis in Kosovo, diplomats said. A decision whether or not to go ahead will be made by the bloc's foreign ministers at talks here Monday, "depending on developments between now and then," a senior EU official said Friday. Under an existing sanctions package, the EU has already imposed a visa ban on Yugoslav officials directly involved in the repression in Kosovo. The EU has also frozen FRY and Serbian government assets, banned new investment in Serbia and refused landing rights to the Yugoslav state airline JAT.

### France to send aircraft carrier to Yugoslav shores

**PARIS (R)** — The French aircraft carrier Foch will leave for the Adriatic Monday to stand by for possible action in the Kosovo crisis, a military spokesman said Friday. The Foch will leave from the Mediterranean port of Toulon and take 48 hours to reach its station. It will carry 14 Super-Standard fighter-bombers and four Emdard photo-reconnaissance planes as well as helicopters, the spokesman told Reuters. The French airforce will meanwhile send eight Mirage 2000 C interceptors and four Mirage 2000 D ground attack planes to the area. The French air force already has five Jaguar strike planes and a C-160 electronics counter-measures aircraft based at Istrana, a NATO base near Italy's Adriatic coast. Defence Minister Alain Richard said Thursday France would have around 40 fighter planes stationed in Italy by the end of next week ready for strikes against Yugoslav targets. We will share our part of the responsibility at the heart of Europe and the Alliance," he told French radio. NATO has increased the pressure on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic over the past two days by sending naval forces to the Adriatic, while its planes are on 48-hour standby for possible strikes.

### S. Korea says N. Korean ex-army captain seeks asylum

**SEOUL (R)** — South Korea said a former North Korean army captain who defected last year arrived in Seoul on Friday seeking political asylum. The 29-year-old man defected from North Korea last September, five months after being discharged from the army, the National Intelligence Service said in a statement Friday. It said the man, identified by a pseudonym, Jong Hyon-Su, had been hiding in an unspecified third country. It gave no further information. Seoul also said it had recovered the body of a man believed to be one of the spies aboard a North Korean infiltration vessel sunk last month. A spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff said the body was found tied to the vessel by an ankle. The navy Tuesday found the wreckage of the semi-submersible craft lying on the seabed off the south coast. The vessel sank on Dec. 18 after a pre-dawn fire about 100 km south of Koje Island and 460 km from the border separating the two Koreas. North Korea has denied it had anything to do with the craft and claimed the incident was fabricated by South Korea to escalate tensions on the peninsula. The two Koreas, divided immediately after the end of imperialist Japanese rule on the peninsula in 1945, remain technically at war since their 1950-53 conflict ended with a ceasefire but not in a peace agreement.

### Grenade attack in Macau kills one, injures two

**MACAU (R)** — A grenade attack killed a suspected Macau gangster Friday and injured two passers-by, police in the Portuguese-ruled territory said. A man hurled the grenade at the 43-year-old man, believed to be a member of a gang from the Chinese province of Fujian, near Macau's city museum. He died in hospital. An elderly couple were wounded, police said. They were in satisfactory condition. The motive for the attack was most likely a conflict between rival Fujian gangs in Macau. About a quarter of Macau's 430,000 residents are immigrants from Fujian. Macau, a gambling centre at the mouth of Pearl River estuary, has been rocked in recent years by a wave of firebombings, arson attacks, drive-by shootings and other violent crimes attributed mostly to organised-crime triads. Macau's growing violence has been a growing source of concern to China, which resumes control over the territory in December. Last September, China said it would station People's Liberation Army troops in Macau after the handover, a decision that was widely viewed as a sign that Beijing would not tolerate organised crime. Following the handover, Macau will operate as a Special Administrative Region of China, with a status similar to that of the neighbouring former British colony of Hong Kong.

### 71-year-old Hungarian survives month in pantry

**BUDAPEST (AFP)** — A 71-year-old Hungarian woman was rescued safe and sound after spending a month locked in her pantry, surviving on boiled fruit and tomato juice, officials said Friday. The woman, who lives alone, accidentally trapped herself on December 22 after the door latch came off and remained in her hand. Firefighter Major Lajos Toerok said. Firefighters released her by cutting the window bars open Wednesday, after neighbours in a Budapest working-class district heard her cries. She was doing "fine" despite her ordeal, firefighters said.

### Giraffe-martyr teaches Chinese to love and respect animals

**BEIJING (AFP)** — A life-size replica of Shanghai-Yokohama, a giraffe killed by tourist litter, is being used to teach Chinese to "love animals and respect nature," official media said Friday. The giraffe, born in Yokohama, Japan before being sent as "an envoy of friendship" to the Shanghai Zoo in 1980, died in 1993 after consuming non-perishable waste discarded by visitors, the Xinhua news agency said. It was reported that Shanghai-Yokohama was found hitting her head against her shed wall just prior to her death. An autopsy found two large bundles of plastic bags filling her stomach. Concerned citizens donated money to build the "Pavilion of Love" where Shanghai-Yokohama's spirit resides, drawing mourning crowds and teaching a new generation of Chinese to respect all forms of life. The pavilion includes the life-sized replica of the giraffe. "Animals are companions for human beings. We should protect them and treat them like friends," said one student visiting the pavilion with her classmates.

## Carter, meets Abubakar, praises return to civilian rule

**ABUJA (AFP)** — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter met Nigeria's military ruler General Abdulsalam Abubakar Friday on the last day of a four-day visit to assess preparations for elections next month.

Carter met Abubakar for around an hour to discuss the elections and the promised return to civilian rule this year, U.S. and Nigerian officials said.

Since he arrived in the country Tuesday, the 74-year-old U.S. politician, who in 1979 became the first U.S. president to visit Africa in the post-colonial era, has met with dozens of politicians and civil society leaders in Lagos, the main city, and Abuja, the capital.

He has praised the government's plans to end the run of military regimes which have blighted Nigeria — with only a four-year break — since 1966.

Abubakar, after coming to power in June following the death of the late military ruler General Sani Abacha, promised a swift return to civilian rule and ordered elections, to be run by an

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The first elections, local polls, took place in December, followed by state polls earlier this month.

Legislative polls are due on Feb. 20, followed by presidential polls on Feb. 27. The military is then supposed to hand over to the elected government May 29.

"These are among the most important elections in the world this year," Carter said Thursday.

"The world will be watching" the return of democracy in Africa's most populous country, he said.

The Carter Centre, a private organisation he set up after leaving the White House to promote democracy and human rights, is among a number of international organisations to send monitors to assess the elections ordered by Abubakar.

Also sending monitors are the Commonwealth, which suspended Nigeria from memberships in 1993 over its human rights abuses, the European Union, the United Nations and an independent

Nigerian watchdog organisation, the Transition Monitoring Group.

Carter praised the running of the elections to date and Thursday persuaded INEC chief Justice Ephraim Akpata to authorise an increase in the number of accredited independent observers.

Friday morning, Carter met first, for breakfast, with General Yakubu Gowon, who ruled the country from July 1966 to 1975, to discuss a health project both are promoting.

He had Thursday also visited the Nigerian war college to give a talk at their Conflict Resolution Centre and praised the role of Nigerian troops in the west African intervention force currently in Sierra Leone.

Carter said he had asked his officials to see what could be done to assist Nigeria with medical supplies for troops wounded in the fighting in the west African country.

Carter was to address a press conference in Lagos later Friday before leaving for the United States via Europe.

## Cambodian king urges government to save treasures

**PHNOM PENH (R)** — King Norodom Sihanouk has called on Prime Minister Hun Sen to save Cambodia's national heritage and stop the theft and smuggling of ancient artefacts out of the country.

The king's call came as neighbouring Thailand said it was ready to return to Cambodia 117 sandstone sculptures looted from a 12th-13th century temple in northwest Cambodia.

The pieces were seized from smugglers earlier this month.

In a message from Beijing where he is

undergoing medical checks, the king expressed concern at recent reports of the theft of carvings and statues from ancient temples.

"Regarding this serious problem I would like the prime minister to check and take proper measures to protect our national heritage," Sihanouk said in his message, released by the palace Friday.

Officials said this week that a treasure trove of ancient Cambodian artefacts, many of them looted from the Angkor and Preah Vihear temples, was being smuggled across the country's

porous border with Thailand.

Police in eastern Thailand intercepted a truck near the Cambodian border on Jan. 5 and found it carrying sculptures dismantled from the inner wall of an Angkor-era temple at Banteay Chamar, 350 km northwest of Phnom Penh.

The haul, one of the biggest of smuggled Cambodian artefacts ever made in the region, was impounded in Thailand's Prachin Buri province. Officials in Prachin Buri said Thursday they were ready to return the items

to Cambodia.

"These ancient treasures were part of the sandstone wall sculptures of Banteay Chamar temple. We are willing to return them to Cambodia as soon as possible," the director of the provincial museum, Amphan Kijngam, told Reuters.

When pieced together the 117 slabs depict a three-metre high and two-and-a-half metre wide figure of the Buddha, showing him in previous and future incarnations, Amphan said.

The carvings would fetch more than 10 million baht (\$280,000) on

the local black market, a museum official said.

A Cambodian official said this week "armed men" stole the carvings from Banteay Chamar. Cambodian government troops and opposition fighters until recently clashed intermittently in the troubled northwest of the country where the temple is located.

Thai investigators and museum officials said the carvings were looted by Cambodian government soldiers.

Cambodian soldiers, police and occasionally foreign tourists have in the past been caught

stealing artefacts and trying to smuggle them to the international black market.

Khmer Rouge guerrillas also looted many artefacts and used them to decorate their houses or hid them in jungles around their old base of Anlong Veng, seized by government forces last year.

The government is now trying to collect the items stolen by the rebels and take them to a conservation centre near the Angkor temples on the outskirts of the northern town of Siem Reap, before guerrillas-turned-smugglers steal them.





Wei Jingsheng (left) talks with president of Taiwan's Parliament Liu Song-Fan in Taipei. Wei, China's most renowned opponent of one-party Communist rule, arrived in Taiwan Monday for a nine-day visit to the Nationalist-ruled island, a move certain to irritate Communist China. Wei Monday assailed Beijing for jailing its opponents and praised Taiwan for junking iron-fisted rule to enable democracy (Reuters photo)

## Chinese dissident Wei praises Taiwan's fledgling democracy

TAIPEI (AFP) — Exiled Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng said Tuesday that Taiwan's democracy was not perfect but vastly superior to China's political system.

Wei arrived here Monday for a unprecedented visit seeking Taiwan's support for his drive to promote democracy on the mainland.

He said he was impressed by a visit to parliament in which he heard Premier Vincent Siew reply to queries from lawmakers.

"Officials must tell lawmakers what the government has done for the people and let the parliament judge what is right and what is wrong," Wei said.

"This is sort of an indispensable procedure for a genuine democracy."

"In my brief stay here (Taiwan) and contacts with figures of different political parties, I discovered they were already able to coordinate and respect each other even if they disagreed on arguments," Wei told reporters.

"It was evidence that Taiwan is mature in the development of democracy."

Wei said Taiwan's system was not flawless if compared with the many democratic systems in the West.

"Ten years ago a number of people in the mainland might think their National People's Congress (NPC) was a good system compared with the frequent scenes of deputies trading blows on the floor of Taiwan's parliament," Wei said.

"But now the people there felt it is not bad. At least in Taiwan the lawmakers are entitled to voice their own opinions."

China's NPC is largely a rubber-stamp organisation under Communist rule. Taiwan became a full democracy after it held its first direct presidential election in 1996.

Monday Wei said one purpose of his trip was to exchange views with leaders here and to see for himself how people in Taiwan had built up their experience of democracy.

"Democracy is democracy, it should be fit for all the people in the world," Wei said Monday.

"Taiwan's system may not necessarily be suitable for the mainland but the fundamental principle is the same."

Taiwan has demanded democracy as a precondition for reunification with China. They were split in 1949 at the end of a civil war.

Wei is due to call on Siew and newly elected Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou on Dec. 28. He has been invited by the ROC (Taiwan) chapter of the non-profit World League for Freedom and Democracy.

He will also make speeches, join seminars and visit parliament as well as the headquarters of the ruling Kuomintang, the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council and the semi-official Straits Exchange Foundation. He leaves on Dec. 29.

It was not clear whether President Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan's first directly elected leader, would meet him. According to some media reports Taiwanese authorities fear such an encounter would jeopardise a recent improvement in relations with the mainland.

Wei was sent into exile in the United States shortly after he was released from a Chinese prison on medical parole in November last year. Fellow dissident Wang Dan was released just months after Wei under similar conditions.

Wei had been in jail for all but about six months of the previous 18 years. He was first arrested in 1979 for calling for democratic reform in China.

## China sentences third leader of would-be democracy party

BEIJING (AP) — Shouting contempt for his summary trial, a Chinese dissident was sentenced to 12 years in prison Tuesday, becoming the third organiser of a would-be opposition party convicted in two days.

The heavy sentence given to Qin Yongmin fell predictably in line with the severe verdicts issued Monday to fellow China Democracy Party leaders: 13 years for Xu Wenli and 11 for Wang Youcai.

Tried in different cities, the three were accused of the same crime, the subversion of China's Communist Party-led system, for the same act, trying to set up the China Democracy Party.

Their quick trials and harsh punishments showed how firmly the Communist Party draws the line at open opposition. Their treatment also undermined China's attempts to burnish its international reputation by signing U.N. rights treaties and nudging its legal system closer to international standards.

"This is a travesty of justice. Xu Wenli, Wang Youcai, Qin Yongmin and others are not attempting to subvert the Chinese government. They are simply trying to hold the government accountable to its people," said Xiao Qiang of New York-based Human Rights in China.

The Intermediate People's Court in the central city of Wuhan took 40 minutes to sentence Qin, five days after his 2 1/2-hour trial, his brother Qin Xiaoguang and fellow dissidents said.

In a near repeat of the verdicts issued against Xu and Wang, judges ruled that Qin planned to "overthrow the socialist system" by organising the China Democracy Party, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Denied entry to the courtroom because he was five minutes late, Qin's brother yelled to Qin as guards led him down the hallway afterwards: "Qin Yongmin, what was the sentence? What was the sentence?" He shouted back twelve years. "I'm not going to appeal. I have contempt for this court," Qin Yongmin said as he was being led away, the brother recounted.

Qin's defiance echoed Xu's at his half-day trial in Beijing Monday. Xu told the court: "I'm willing to use the sacrifice of myself to promote democracy in China. I'm not one who encourages a struggle and then just lets others shed their blood," his wife, He Xintong, said late Monday.

China defended the convictions, saying the dissidents broke the laws on subversion and infringed upon the rights of the state and other citizens.

"If the security of a country and the dignity and order of the law cannot be preserved, the human rights of the people cannot be guaranteed," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said at a briefing.

Zhu argued that China was meeting its obligations under the U.N.'s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights because the treaty recognises the importance of protecting national security.

Responding to international criticism, Zhu said other countries should "refrain from making irresponsible remarks about China's judicial system."

With Qin, Xu and Wang — the most influential members of the China Democracy Party — heading to prison, Chinese authorities appear to be focusing their crackdown, now in its fourth week, on the group's second-tier leaders.

Police in Hangzhou city in eastern China took away party member Wu Yilong Monday night, a Hong Kong-based rights group reported.

In the Hangzhou court's verdict against Wang Monday, judges identified Wu and Zhu Zhengming, who was detained a week ago, as important party members, the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China reported.

Police in Wuhan also detained at least two colleagues of Qin's Monday night to prevent them from demonstrating outside the courthouse Tuesday, one of the pair, Chen Zhonghe said.

Wang Youcai, 32, was a student leader in the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations who declared the formation of the opposition group in June.

Qin, 45, and a Democracy Wall veteran, has spent about a decade in prison. He tried to set up an independent human rights monitoring group in addition to organising the China Democracy Party.

Xu, 55, was known as an effective organiser and a moderating voice. He earlier served 12 years in prison — much of it in solitary confinement — for his involvement in the Democracy Wall movement of the late 1970s.

Their efforts drew enough support that in six months activists tried to set up branches of the China Democracy Party in 14 provinces and cities.

In Washington, the State Department called on Chinese authorities to release the men immediately.

"This form of peaceful political expression deserves the protection of all governments," said Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott. "We not only deplore that they were detained and tried for such actions but are deeply disturbed by the long sentences imposed and the lack of due process."

China and Taiwan have been ruled separately since Nationalist forces fled to the island after losing a civil war to Mao Zedong's Communists on the mainland.

While China is pushing Taiwan to enter political negotiations leading to eventual reunification, Taipei has dragged its feet, saying it prefers to wait until Beijing introduces a democratic system.

China says vast population an obstacle to democracy

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday again ruled out the possibility of introducing Western-style democracy to the world's most populous country.

"China is now promoting democracy and a legal system," foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao told a news conference. But the massive population would continue to stand in the way of efforts

to expand the direct election system already seen at village level, Zhu said.

"Up to now we cannot adopt a direct election system because the country is very big and has large cultural differences between different areas," he said.

"It is impossible for us to incorporate a Western style election system."

Zhu further emphasised that adopting a more democratic system, such as that which exists in Taiwan, would be "unreasonable and impractical" for China.

"The real difference between us and Taiwan is not a dispute over democracy, but whether or not we will maintain the sovereignty and integrity of the state," he said.

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China says vast population an obstacle to democracy

BEIJING (AFP) — A 14th-century stone statue of Buddha is to be returned to New Delhi by a New York museum, years after it disappeared from India, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Tuesday.

The life-size statue went missing from a private collection in the eastern state of Bihar in 1989, and is now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the news agency said.

It quoted an Indian government official, R.V.V. Ayyar, as saying the museum, which reportedly purchased the statue for \$50,000 in 1990, had agreed to return it to India without seeking any money in return.

The statue's return journey "will take place some time in February," PTI said.

Ayyar said the statue would be returned to its owner. "But first we have to find out how it disappeared... and landed in a far off place," he said.

Although Buddhism began in India, the country only has around 6.6 million Buddhists. Most of India's 975 million people are Hindus.

## Buddhist statue returning to India from U.S.

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## Is eight enough or too many? Octuplets spark debate

HOUSTON (AP) — While doctors guard the fragile health of the world's first surviving set of octuplets, the births have rekindled the medical community's debate over the use of fertility drugs.

The babies born to Nkem Chukwu were "a disaster" from an infertility standpoint, said Randle Corfman, director of the Midwest Centre for Reproductive Health in Robbinsdale, Minnesota.

Corfman worried that insurance companies may reconsider providing health coverage for women like Chukwu who have fertility treatment. Others question whether parents who take fertility drugs really understand the health risks of underdeveloped multiple births.

"The fact is that the vast majority of these cases (of quadruplets or more) end in disaster, sometimes for the mom, most often for the babies," Alan Copperman said in Tuesday's New York Times.

Copperman, director of reproductive endocrinology at M.

Sinai-New York Medical Centre, said every time a case like the Chukwu comes along, desperate couples become more willing to take greater risks.

By the time Chukwu's eight tiny children are well enough to be taken home, an estimated \$2 million will have been spent on their care, about \$250,000 a child, predicted Leonard Weisman, chief neonatologist at Texas Children's Hospital.

Doctors said the infants, who have not yet been named, could be in the hospital for up to two months, while their mother may be released within a week.

The six girls and two boys remained in critical condition Monday at Texas Children's. They have been given an 85 per cent chance of survival past the first few months.

Chief among the worries with the Chukwu children was lung development. Baby A, the girl born Dec. 8, was delivered 15 weeks premature. Her two brothers and five sisters were born Sunday morning, 13 weeks

early. All were placed on ventilators.

"It's alarming in the sense premature babies have problems," Weisman said.

Brian Kirshon, who delivered the octuplets, said the woman and her husband, Lyke Chukwu, a respiratory therapist at a Houston hospital, rejected the idea of "selective reduction," a technique in which doctors abort some fetuses so others have a better chance of survival.

"It was totally out of the question," to the deeply religious, Nigerian-born couple, Kirshon said.

The octuplets are covered by the family's insurance. But it's a matter of time, according to Corfman, before insurance companies reexamine how to cover infertility treatments when multiple births produce such sickly children.

"Our fear is that is exactly what will happen," he said.

"They'll say we cannot cover this."

"When we use these medicines we have to be conscious of the fact that we cannot predict with certainty which eggs will take."

When we start cranking up having the woman produce more than one egg, we run the risk of producing more than one baby."

And more babies in a womb designed to hold just one increases the likelihood the infants will have undersized lungs, brains and hearts.

Weisman said the advent of fertility treatments has forced the medical community to confront the ethical issues surrounding multiple births.

Should doctors, for example, be more aggressive about promoting selective reduction? And should multiple births, which are increasing annually, be viewed as successful notwithstanding the health risks?

"For certain families who are having trouble conceiving I think they are a success," Weisman said. "The problem, the side effect is you wind up with all these multiple pregnancies, multiple births which result in a lot of increase in health problems."

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## Refining services for 2000

PREPARATIONS IN Jordan for the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ are going at full speed ahead. New hotels are springing up in all parts of Amman, the baptism site of Jesus on the Jordan River is being excavated and developed ahead of its opening to the public, and the country's attractions are finally beginning to be marketed abroad with some degree of success. But there remains one area that, unfortunately, still fails to meet the minimum expectations of both foreign guests and Jordanians alike: Service.

From the airport to the hotel to the restaurant, the service offered in most establishments leaves something to be desired. Taxi drivers "forget" to turn on the meter, when it even works. Restaurant staff are unknowledgeable about the food offered and do not display the desire to make sure customers are satisfied or that orders are correct. It is not a good situation when a visitor must haggle over what should already be a fixed price upon arrival or when someone who has finished a long day of work cannot enjoy a meal in a restaurant without a hassle.

But the problem goes farther than outlined above, affecting even the Kingdom's major archaeological and touristic sites. Petra, while beautiful and breathtaking, is essentially a solo endeavour, since there are no park rangers to guide tourists along the poorly-marked trails. The same situation prevails at Jerash, and even this poor level of service is not available in other important areas, such as the desert castles and pre-historic sites.

What is needed is a more serious approach to offering services to the public and foreign visitors. Sites such as Petra and Jerash should have park rangers who are knowledgeable about the features and any possible dangers of the area. As in other countries, these rangers or tour guides should be fluent in the languages that are most widely spoken by visitors. And the taxi and restaurant businesses should be regulated with greater efficiency with a view to reducing the incidence of price inflation.

The tourism sector can be developed without overly commercialising it. In tandem with other steps to modernise the tourism industry, improving services is a must. The way people are treated usually makes the difference as to whether they return or not.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Raja Issa said Israel has exploited Palestinian reaction to the U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq to freeze the implementation of the Wye River accord. The Israeli cabinet has demanded that the Palestinian National Authority combat "terrorism," refrain from declaring an independent state, and halt calls for the release of detainees, as pre-conditions for the resumption of the peace deal, Issa added. According to the writer, the majority of Palestinians have not supported the Wye agreement as they are aware of Israeli "procrustianism," and unstinting U.S. support for the Jewish state.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket said the most significant outcome of the "barbaric" allied attack on Iraq is the "ugliness and falseness" of the new world order, launched by the U.S. The absence of other superpowers, which had previously deterred Western and U.S. "colonial" domination, has proved that the principles of human rights, democracy and international legitimacy are purely for "media consumption," said Saket. The U.N. is now nothing but a mechanism to add legitimacy to U.S. interests, he added. It has been proven that U.S. concern for democracy has only been used as justification to topple regimes in other countries, Saket said, adding that the U.S.-Zionist alliance is above international law. The writer called on all nations searching for freedom, justice and peace to combat the new world order.

## Washington Watch

## Ten days of confusion

By Dr. James Zogby

THESE HAVE been extraordinary 10 days of conflicting events and confusing emotions. I began the week in Washington preparing to leave to join President Clinton's historic visit to Gaza. We had formed a delegation of 18 Arab-American leaders to make this trip. Before we left, Congress' Judiciary Committee completed its debate on impeachment and had begun voting on articles of impeachment. It was a bitter partisan debate.

Once in Jerusalem, however, the impeachment process passed out of mind. The president and all who were with him focused on the drama at hand.

As the president entered an overflowing hall in Jerusalem to address Israeli students, the cheers were deafening. The students gave their own prime minister a more subdued greeting. In addressing the group, Netanyahu was defensive and posturing. "We are the victims who want peace. They are unrepentant and hostile," and so on, were the general thrust of his inciting remarks.

Clinton stuck a more balanced tone. While acknowledging the special U.S.-Israel relationship, he pleaded with the audience to look to the future and support peace. Later that evening at a state dinner, Clinton delivered a subtle but stunning rebuke to Netanyahu's moral self-righteousness and arrogance when he closed his remarks by noting: "My Bible reminds me that we must be able to forgive what others have done to us, if we are to be forgiven for what we have done to them. And it tells us that it is the peacemakers who are

blessed and their reward shall be great."

But the highlight of this visit was not the standoff with Netanyahu. It was the president's visit to Gaza. If what we sought was a historic event, we were not disappointed. American and Palestinian flags filled the streets and decorated buildings. Posters and signs everywhere welcomed "Bill Clinton to Palestine" or showed Clinton and Arafat with the logo "we have a dream."

The president's speech before the Palestine National Council, Legislative Council, and Palestinian leaders was the most developed and far-reaching comment on Palestinian rights and U.S.-Palestinian relations ever delivered by a U.S. official. Whatever happens to Clinton or to the peace process, the contribution made by this speech will survive.

With millions of Americans listening, the president spoke passionately of Palestinian history ("a history of dispossession and dispersal") and aspirations ("to shape a new Palestinian future on your own land"). And he acknowledged Palestinian suffering and their history of "oppression and dispossession," as well as Palestinian concerns: "Separation of families, restriction of movement... settlement activity, land confiscations and home demolitions." This one speech elevated U.S. public discourse about Palestinian rights and recognised, and made legitimate, much of what we have fought for during the past few decades. No, it did not recognise a Palestinian state, but it laid the groundwork for such recognition.

The Arab-Americans who accompanied the president were elated and felt vindicated. What we paid a price for saying just 10 years ago, the president was now acknowledging.

The next morning we awoke to read the news reports of the president's speech side-by-side with Republican calls for the president to resign. It was surreal.

We travelled to Bethlehem where Clinton and his family sang Christmas songs of peace, lit the Christmas tree in Manger Square, and then left on their way back to the United States.

A Palestinian woman approached me after the ceremony and through tears of joy, told me that "this was indeed a blessed Christmas." "For so many years now," she said, "we have had nothing to bring us joy in this Christmas season. Now for the first time in so long, I feel there is hope."

As we were leaving to return to the United States later that day we heard the news that U.S. efforts had failed to convince Netanyahu to implement the Wye peace memorandum and the Palestinian-Israeli process would remain stalled.

The charge would be made that Clinton's visit was all symbol and no substance — a charge we were prepared to refute. While no progress could be reported and the intransigence of the Israeli government remained an obstacle — now compounded by reports that the entire process might be frozen awaiting new Israeli elections — the contribution made by the symbolism of the U.S. visit was in itself important. It represented an irreversible step forward in U.S.

recognition of Palestinian rights, a step that could be built on.

This was the message I had intended to bring back to the United States on Wednesday morning and that I had hoped to share with Arab-American listeners and callers to my television and radio talk shows later that day. However, what I learned as I left the airport was that the United States was about to begin a bombing campaign against Iraq. And if that was not confusing enough, the impeachment vote, which we had all attempted to push out of mind in Jerusalem, was scheduled for later in the week.

As I write this article, CNN is alternating coverage of the partisan debate on impeachment with eerie green night vision scenes of bombs bursting over downtown Baghdad. Even more disturbing and incongruous are the contrasting sounds from Iraq itself — the morning call to prayer clashing with the explosions from missiles and anti-aircraft fire.

Republicans who have been tormenting the president since he was elected are finally getting their opportunity to deliver the ultimate humiliation — impeachment in Congress and a trial before the U.S. Senate. All sides agree that it was Clinton's own behaviour that created this mess. The bitter partisan debate, however, is over whether or not "lying about sex" warrants removal from office.

Iraq has also become a part of this partisan bickering with Republicans raising "Wag the Dog" questions: Did the president time the bombing to delay the impeachment votes, or is the White House sufficiently com-

mitted to removing the Iraqi regime from power? In all of this, for the time being at least, Palestine and peace have been pushed aside. On the West Bank the United States flags, waving only a week ago, are today being burned. Momentum on which we could have built has been temporarily lost.

What is equally disturbing is that what CNN's 24 hour coverage of Iraq does not show are the people of that country. Once again they are forgotten. Their callous and brutish leader oppresses or uses them, and the U.S. either ignores their suffering or compounds it. What we see are buildings and bombs, but no people. One can only wonder what will be seen when the dust settles, and will anything have changed?

To add to this momentous and almost pointless confusion, is the fact that although the Republican Congress may have had its way, the impeachment may end with nothing having been accomplished. The Senate, in all probability, will not find the 67 votes it needs to remove the president from office. Whether they decide to end this farce early or with a resolution of censure or decide to prolong the agony with a debilitating and embarrassing trial, in the end, Clinton can survive this ordeal, if he so chooses.

And so we have endured these long 10 days of conflicting events and confusing emotions, wondering how to feel and what to think. And asking the questions: What has been accomplished and what might have been different?

## Impeachment charade defies majority's will

By Gloria Steinem

NEW YORK — It is time to register outraged and principled opposition to the impeachment charade now going on in Washington. Yet few protests are receiving much media attention.

For example, on Sept. 24 in Washington, the leaders of major women's groups such as the National Organisation for Women and the National Council of Negro Women, plus social justice groups like the United Farm Workers and the Asian-Pacific Legal Consortium, came together in a historic coalition to oppose President Bill Clinton's resignation or impeachment.

Mr. Clinton's "misdeeds are not of the nature of high crimes and misdemeanours," the groups said. "As feminist leaders, we will not stand idly by while a Congress made up of nearly 90 per cent men attempts to remove the first president elected by women voters." They also noted that a 90 per cent white Congress would be impeaching a president supported by more than 90 per cent of African-American voters.

The press mostly ignored the press conference. Instead, media pundits repeated the right-wing line that feminists did not support Paula Jones — though we always supported her access to the courts, despite the borderline nature of her case of sexual harassment.

What the media does report is every hypocritical word in the unrepresentative House Judiciary Committee, plus opinions from talking heads neatly divided into those for and against impeachment. This is supposed to serve objectivity. In fact, it only gives the false impression that public opinion is equally divided.

We know it is not. The huge majority of Americans opposes Mr. Clinton's impeachment.

The press attributes even that irrefutable result of public opinion polls to some notion of economic comfort, as if Mr. Clinton were being supported only out of the selfishness created by a good economy.

In fact, those who support Mr. Clinton the most are those who benefit from this economy the least. Opposition to impeachment exists because people around America are smart enough to know that "Impeach Clinton" and even "Impeach Hillary" bumper stickers have been sold by right-wing groups ever since the Clintons entered the White House.

People are smart enough to figure out that members of Congress voting for impeachment have a suspiciously high correlation to those supported by lobbies such as the tobacco industry, the American Rifle Association and anti-abortion organisations — all sworn enemies of Mr. Clinton and his policies.

Do I agree with all of Mr. Clinton's policies? Of course not. I'll never forgive him for signing the welfare bill. But I also know that he has stood for equal economic and human rights far more than his Republican opponents — and I know which interest groups are angered by Mr. Clinton's policies.

I also know that even if President Ronald Reagan or President George Bush had been guilty of the same sexual misjudgement — and then tried to conceal it — I would not have supported their impeachment. Indeed, when the right-wing Representative Bob Bauman of Maryland, was accused of a sexual episode with a young man, the only question I and other feminists asked was: Was this welcome sex or not? Because if it was welcome, then it was not sexual harassment. And it was not our business.

My fear is that the right wing is distorting and

defeating sexual harassment law in much the same way that they have tried to distort and defeat affirmative action law.

Remember, these are the same people who opposed sexual harassment law in the first place. Phyllis Schlafly testified in Congress against it and insisted that if women just dressed and behaved like ladies, they would not be harassed. But now, the right wing is trying to use its version of the law to peacefully assassinate a president. In the process, they have convinced more than 60 per cent of Americans that sexual harassment law has gone too far; that it forbids all sex in the workplace, all sex between unequals, even all sex outside of marriage — none of which it does or should do.

In fact, sexual harassment law has nothing to do with welcome sex. The use of the word "welcome" is an innovation of this law. "Consent" can be coerced. "Welcomeness" cannot.

Mr. Clinton should not have had to testify about Monica Lewinsky. The enjoyment of mutually welcome sex, does not constitute a "pattern and practice" of unwelcome sex. Unequal status may be suspicious, but it is not dispositive, as lawyers say. We are not the sex police. Any idea that this law allows such policing will only defeat a good and much-needed code.

We should also call for an end to the humiliation of Ms. Lewinsky. This young woman broke no law, yet found herself surrounded by FBI agents and denied access to her own lawyer. She has been forced to reveal the most intimate details of her private life — under threat of her own imprisonment, and even the imprisonment of her mother.

We owe it to her and ourselves to protest against the jokes, humiliation and ridicule she

has suffered. She has the right to privacy, sexual expression and legal protection — and if she does not, neither do we.

We should also admit that we may be projecting our own experience. For example, I have two women friends who were sexually abused by their fathers. They have a hard time believing that Ms. Lewinsky could have done what she did voluntarily. I know another woman who was done in by a faithless husband. Mr. Clinton's example hits a bruise, and she reacts with pain and anger. I have had neither experience, and so can believe that Ms. Lewinsky acted voluntarily.

It is clear that many people in the media hate Mr. Clinton, even though they agree with him on issues more than I do. It drives them crazy that Mr. Clinton has won the most powerful position in the world without the proper "masculine" behaviour.

For example, his origins were lower-class; he married a wife who was at least his equal; he refused to go to war, and he actually listens.

In other words, Mr. Clinton refused to play the usual male game — and won anyway.

But none of these personal reasons can justify impeachment.

Mr. Clinton's behaviour — self-defeating and reckless as it was — does not constitute "reason or other high crimes and misdemeanours." If he is impeached, any partisan majority will be able to impeach any president. Is that what we want?

— The International Herald Tribune

## Confessions of a fraud

By Gwynne Dyer

IT WAS 25 years ago, and I was fulminating about how stupid journalists are. You know how it is: If you know anything about a subject yourself, then what the journalists write about it always seems slightly wrong. So there had been a coup in Turkey, and "The Times" had got it wrong — and to shut me up, my wife (as she then was) said: "Why don't you write something about it yourself?"

I stopped as if I had been shot. "Can I do that?" I said — meaning am I allowed to do that, because it had never occurred to me that you could just send the paper an article and they might publish it. So I did, and they did, and I showed all my friends a copy of the article in "The Times" and sent my mother a clipping. They paid me, too, but that was almost a bonus.

But it's like a drug. My sole qualifications were that I had been in a couple of navies, picked up a couple of degrees in history, and knocked around Europe and the Middle East a bit, but soon I was writing several articles a month for the London broadsheets: "The Guardian", "The Times", the "Daily Telegraph", the "Financial Times". And then I discovered that none of them would run articles by outside contributors more than once a month.

Production was outrunning demand, so 25 years ago this month I went global. I sent my articles to papers all around the world, and some of them, to my secret astonishment,

started using them at once. So now I have been a global pundit for a quarter-century, and its time for a confession: You have to be a fraud to write a column like this.

The problem is that you cannot have the up-to-date local knowledge you need to write two or three times a week about every part of the world for an audience that lives in every part of the world until you have been doing this full-time for five or ten years. Its a steep learning curve, and there are no apprenticeship schemes. So you just have to start doing it, and skate around the people you haven't yet met and the places you haven't yet been, until you have the time to get on top of your material.

If you're good enough at faking it, they'll send you money for your opinions anyway. If you're wise, you'll use a lot of that money to fill in the blanks on your personal map. And after ten years or so, those dreams about being caught in public wearing nothing but your Maidenform bra will get less frequent.

Not that you'll ever really know what's going on, because nobody does. But you'll know more than most of the other frauds who pretend to have a handle on the world, and that's good enough: In the land of the blind, the one-eyed journalist seems wise.

A couple of years ago, I interviewed an American journalist who had just won instant fame by parlaying a long trip through some of the worst hell-holes in the world into a sweeping theory that the entire planet was about to divide into guarded and gated estates for the

rich, surrounded by swarming cesspits of poverty, disease and violence where the other 90 per cent of the human race would pass their brief and bitter lives.

It was complete nonsense, of course, but it sold very well in a post-cold war Washington where all the think-tanks were looking for a new Global Threat. So suddenly our man was the new global pundit — and when I needed a straw man who would earnestly propound this theory in a radio series I was doing at the time, who better than the original source?

So I interviewed him (I don't think he even asked to be paid), and got him to talk about places where it seemed to me that the course of events argued strongly against his theory. Within minutes he was way out of his depth. He couldn't afford to admit that he had never been to South Africa, or South Korea, or wherever, so he faked it — and once I realised what he was doing, it was dead easy to lead him on to bigger and more blatant fakes.

It was a cruel game, and after ten minutes or so I stopped it. I didn't call him on it to his face, and I never used the tape, because I suddenly realised that he was doing exactly what I had done at the start. You have to fake it at first, because most people have no idea how big and complicated the world is, and expect a "global expert" to have answers for everything.

I have seen what this man has been writing more recently, and he's doing fine. He's spending every spare minute travelling to fill in the blanks, and his analysis gets better by

the month. But its only by being recognised as a certified global pundit that you may eventually get the time, money and access to earn that title.

So tell us, oh ancient of days: What have you learned from your twenty-five years in the punditry trade?

Probably less than I should have, but you can't write 3,300 articles on international affairs (three a week for fifteen years, then two a week for the past ten) without reaching some conclusions about the way the world works, and how that changes. And the most important thing I have learned, by far, is that the world is not nearly as stupid and nasty as the news would lead you to believe.

I am not naive. I have seen the wars, the famines, and the genocides, and I have met any number of psychopathic liars, mass murderers, religious fanatics and nationalists. But from the cold war to apartheid to the "population bomb", the "debt bomb", and the "bomb bomb", most things have turned out far better than even the moderate optimists expected. Moreover, the world is a far more rational, less violent, and even kinder place than it used to be.

I suspect that you don't believe me, because 90 per cent of the "news," almost by definition, is bad news. But that's the proportion left after the editorial selection process is finished. From this side of the news, and with the benefit of a long perspective in the trade, it looks different.

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 By Bob Tourtell



# Oil price crunch compounds Mideast gloom

By Alistair Lyon  
Reuters

**COLLAPSED OIL** prices, frustration with Israeli-Palestinian wrangling and the latest blitz on Iraq promise a jittery 1999 for vulnerable Middle Eastern leaders.

The United States and Britain, weary by what they see as the Iraqi leader's persistent defiance of U.N. arms inspectors, launched the first of what could be a series of air strikes to reduce Iraq's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction.

President Saddam Hussein had twice risked devastating U.S.-led assaults earlier in the year. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan managed to defuse the first crisis over access to "presidential" sites in February. An 11th-hour Iraqi climbdown that let the arms inspectors resume work averted military action in November.

But the United States and Britain were swift to decide that this week's report by chief U.N. arms inspector Richard Butler alleging Iraqi non-cooperation justified punitive air strikes.

Iraq had hoped a promised U.N. Security Council review would recognise progress made since the 1991 Gulf war on dismantling its banned weapons and bringing an end to crippling U.N. sanctions.

Iraq accuses the United States and Britain, which said in November they would step up support to seemingly feeble Iraqi exiled dissident groups, of conspiring to prolong sanctions.

Despite U.S. President Bill Clinton's efforts to rescue the interim land-for-security deal he brokered at Wye River in October, Israel and the Palestinians go into the New Year bitterly at odds over the shape of an elusive peace.

Ahead of them is the time-bomb of May 4, the date set by the 1993 Oslo accords for a final settlement.

The Palestinians vow to proclaim a state, however, truncated, on that day. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel would annex parts of the West Bank in reprisal. Violence could result.

One Palestinian official summed up Arab anger at

Israel's bid to add new terms to the Wye accord by saying Palestinians might soon be required to "sing the Israeli national anthem."

Clinton lifted Palestinian spirits by becoming the first U.S. president to visit Palestinian-ruled land in December.

But he failed at a summit with Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to persuade Israel to withdraw from more of the West Bank on the scheduled date of December 18.

Netanyahu, whose political survival is at risk from hard-line opposition to the Wye deal in his coalition, confirmed Israel would not proceed with the pullback, accusing the Palestinians — to their fury — of reneging on their commitments.

Arafat's own future is at stake as he strives to win control of more land in return for harsh action against Islamic militants and other foes of his fraying peace deals with Israel.

Israel's prospects of making peace with Syria and Lebanon remain in the deep freeze, while Egypt, its oldest peace partner, has led the Arab World in spurning ini-

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tiatives aimed at integrating the Jewish state into the regional economy.

Mounting casualties suffered by Israeli troops at the hands of pro-Iranian Hizbollah fighters may stir more anguished debate in Israel on withdrawing from a border strip in south Lebanon.

Lebanon, under Syrian tutelage, has refused to offer Israel any security guarantees while it holds the Syrian Golan Heights.

Citing Damascus' wider strategic interests, analysts say it suits a militarily weakened Syria to have Israel bleeding in south Lebanon until it is willing to quit the Golan.

Worries about the health of Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad, Arafat, and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, among others, will continue to weigh on an Arab World whose entrenched rulers generally stifle calls for democratic change.

Turkey and Algeria plan elections next year and Netanyahu forced to call early polls over his handling of peace efforts. But deep divisions in each of those volatile societies may make it hard to translate votes into

stable governments.

While many regional rulers have proved adept at dealing with political foes, their favoured methods of coercion and co-option may prove inadequate for the challenge of tumbling oil prices.

"Oil producers have lost a third of their revenue and some are already finding it hard to pay salaries," said one Arab oil analyst. "Next year is going to be very tough for everyone." The Gulf states, sitting on almost half of world oil reserves, are reeling from the collapse of crude prices, which on an average annual basis are the lowest since 1976.

Economists say the cash crunch is pushing reform up the agenda of the conservative governments, whose oil revenue — about three quarters of their income — has financed bloated bureaucracies, lavish welfare cushions and big defence outlays.

Oil giant Saudi Arabia has chopped spending and announced it would privatise its telephone and power sectors.

Crown Prince Abdullah, who has taken over most of Saudi Arabia's day-to-day

affairs from his frail brother King Fahd, sent a frank alarm call to his Arab neighbours in December.

"It's useful for us, governments and people, to remind ourselves that the boom days are gone and will not come back," he told a Gulf Cooperation Council summit.

Kuwait, shaken by the Iraq crisis, endured government splits and clashes with parliament. Dwindling oil revenue slowed its deficit-ridden economy and its stock market slid 40 per cent.

In impoverished Yemen, reliant on its limited reserves of oil, attempts at economic reform sparked price riots.

Libya, another hard-hit oil producer, may at last find its way out of U.N. sanctions imposed in 1992 for its refusal to extradite two suspects in the Lockerbie bombing 10 years ago.

After Annan interceded with Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan People's Congress in December backed a plan, already approved by the United States and Britain, for the two men to be tried on neutral soil. That would effectively end sanctions.

## Global Village

### History tells why Frenchmen don't change underpants

By Claire Rosenberg  
Agence France Presse

**THOUGH ALMOST** every French household now has a bathroom, the French still don't like to shower or change their underwear, making them among the dirtiest peoples in Europe.

Statistics released this week show that less than half the country's adults take a daily shower or bath and two out of five Frenchmen do not change their underpants each day.

Publishing the gruesome figures, Le Figaro newspaper warned that "the lights are on grey" in France and gravely concluded that "daily hygiene is not up to standard here."

But the country's lack of affection for soap and water has a history. Even back in the days of the 17th Century, the courtiers who frequented "Sun King" Louis XIV. sprinkled themselves with perfume to kill bad smells but rarely washed, while in other European courts, baths were being elevated to the rank of institution.

"There is a national continuity, a French specificity at play here," said psychiatrist and writer Edouard Zola. "Even today the French remain Europe's top consumers of perfumes and cosmetics."

"In the U.S. and in northern Europe, there has long been an association between cleanliness and hygiene. Cleanliness and fear of germs. But in France and in other Latin countries people don't see washing as a means of hygiene," he told Le Figaro. "The proof is that you find dirty people in all social classes."

In a country whose yearly soap consumption is less than half that of Germany or Britain, a total 47 per cent of people take a daily bath or shower, with women overall cleaner than men, hygiene higher in southern

France than in the north, and rural-dwellers the most allergic to soap and water.

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This is a drastic improvement on the early 1980s, when only 36 per cent took a daily shower. But it leaves the French well behind the Dutch or the Danes, where 80 per cent of people bathe fully each day, and trailing Britain and Germany, at over 70 per cent.

The French, Le Figaro said, were about as clean, or unclean, as the Italians, with the Greeks, Spaniards and Portuguese even further down the scale.

Yet 96 per cent of households have bathrooms against 29 per cent in 1962 and even in rural France almost nine out of 10 homes have showers or

baths.

Cross-country the situation varies enormously, with southerners boasting an average 5.2 showers per week per adult while the prize for filth goes to western Brittany with 3.8 weekly showers, followed by the north, Normandy and the Loire valley.

French women, especially city residents under 45, generally come out better than their male compatriots in the hygiene statistics, with 75 per cent changing their underwear each day and 49 per cent taking a daily shower against 45 per cent of men.

But experts believe the statistics may be far kinder than the reality.

If the statistics were right, then the French should be buying around twice the four to five bars of soap used per person per year. They should also be buying more toothbrushes and toothpaste should it be true that 67 per cent of them brush their teeth twice daily.

Dental hygiene nevertheless has improved sharply in France but there is a controversy over the washing of hands.

Zarifian said there was currently a campaign in French hospitals to remind doctors of the need to wash their hands before and after seeing patients. "If the medical corps has forgotten the most elementary rules of hygiene why should the rest of the population be any better?"

Only 59 per cent of the French wash their hands after going to the toilet.

Yet in a country where the partaking of food remains a national pastime, 85 per cent of people wash their hands before a meal. Unlike the new-fangled practice of showering — more common among the young and in cities — washing one's hands before a meal is more common in the country and among older people.

### Father Fidel lets Santa back in

By Tom Gibb

**CUBA'S COMMUNIST** rulers have declared that Santa Claus and nativity scenes can return to the island for good, almost 30 years after Christmas was abolished as a public holiday. The whole of the front page of the official daily newspaper Granma was dedicated yesterday to why it is now in the interests of the Marxist revolution to reinstate Christmas. It was allowed last year as a special gesture to Pope John Paul on the eve of

his visit to the island.

The article concluded: "In this glorious, victorious and heroic hour of our fatherland, all proofs of consideration and respect towards the beliefs and most heartfelt desires of many of our co-citizens contribute to the unity of our people." But the announcement also warned that the revolution will continue to defend itself "energetically against all efforts of imperialism to use religious sentiments for counter-revolutionary ends."

Until 1992 Cuba was offi-

cially an atheist state, and believers were barred from Communist Party membership and from many careers, such as medicine and law. Religious schools were closed and foreign priests expelled. In such an atmosphere most Cubans felt safer ignoring Christmas. Perception of state disapproval ended only when Fidel Castro sat in the front row of a Mass given by Pope John Paul under the gaze of the Che Guevara mural in Havana's Revolution Square. The change was satirised in

countless jokes passed by word of mouth. One satirical poem, entitled Confusion, portrayed the dilemma of a Communist Party militant who no longer knew whether to chant "Fatherland or death" or "amen," or whether Dr Castro should be referred to as Commandante or Father Fidel.

Since January the Pope's condemnation of the United States embargo has been at the centre of Cuban campaigning to have sanctions lifted. The government has eased up on the Church's strictly religious activities — allowing more foreign priests into the country and legalising some church publications.

In return the Catholic bishops, in marked contrast to the past, have been careful to avoid any public criticism of the one-party state, the lack of political freedom or the continued imprisonment and harassment of political dissenters.

However, since last year the price of pork and other ingredients of a traditional Cuban Christmas dinner have increased greatly, with many basic foods hard to find.

The models of Santa Claus and the Christmas trees on sale in the shops of old Havana attract the attention of dozens of youngsters who have never seen them before. But like all those who have grown up since the revolution, few have much idea what the festival is about. And at the equivalent of about £12 for a tiny tree, few have the money to buy them.

— The Guardian



### Hollywood could wake up to chilly Christmas Day

By Bob Tourtellotte  
Reuters

**CHRISTMAS COULD** turn into one chilly day in sunny Hollywood.

On Christmas — one of the year's busiest days for theatres as stir-crazy relatives look for ways to get out of the house — four of Hollywood's seven major studios raise the curtain on what they believe could be Oscar winners.

For audiences, that means a mix of tree-topping stars: John Travolta in "A Civil Action," Robin Williams in "Patch Adams," Sean Penn and Woody Harrelson in "The Thin Red Line," Wesley Snipes in "Down In The Delta," Susan Sarandon and Julia Roberts in "Stepmom" — and the giant ape in "Mighty Joe Young." At the studios, however, producers and executives will be waiting to see if their movies perform more like the Grinch who stole Christmas or the red-nosed reindeer who saved it.

"You're crashing toward the end of the year. It's Oscar qualification time and everybody wants to be consid-

ered," said Ted Hartley, head of RKO Pictures and a "Mighty Joe" producer.

"There will be some very good movies that don't last very long, and they are going to get dropped because of the competition." All that variety could be the best part about the holidays, though. Audiences get to choose at the box office what they like rather than letting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, who pick Oscar winners, tell them.

In 1995, "Babe," a little film about a pig who longed to be a prize-winning sheepdog, surprised audiences with offbeat humour and dazzling special effects that made a barnyard of animals appear human. It received seven Oscar nominations.

This Thanksgiving, "Babe: Pig in the City" opens a new chapter in which the pink porker gets an \$80 million makeover and an urban pet's adventure courtesy of Universal Pictures.

Opening against "Babe" is Disney's computer-animated "A Bug's Life."

While much has been written about the similarity between it and DreamWorks' "ANTZ," already in theatres, because both revolve around ants, in reality they are different.

"Bug's Life" focuses on "flea circus" performers and their ant leader (voiced by NewsRadio's Dave Foley) who save an ant colony, while "ANTZ" told of a search for individuality.

At the opposite end of the spectrum comes "The Ringmaster," starring talk show host Jerry Springer, about two feuding families who appear on the often hostile and sometimes controversial "The Jerry Springer Show." Among independent movies, Peter Berg of TV drama "Chicago Hope" has directed "Very Bad Things" in which a group of friends attempt to cover up the bachelor party murder of a prostitute. Because of the dark and violent subject matter, the movie was deemed too hot to handle by the major Hollywood studios but its producer said it is really a comedy.

"It's shocking," said producer Cindy Cowen. "But once you get past the first 10 minutes you find it's OK

to laugh." Many critics first laughed at Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 "Psycho," but audiences have since loved it and the movie has become a classic of the horror genre. And on Dec. 4, audiences again can vacation at the Bates Motel with a shot-for-shot remake of "Psycho." This one has Vince Vaughn playing crazy Norman and Anne Heche screaming bloody murder in the shower.

On a much lighter note, on the weekend of Dec. 11 Michael Keaton stars in the family comedy "Jack Frost" as a snowman who comes to life to make peace with his grieving family, and real-life sweethearts Gwyneth Paltrow and Ben Affleck come together in the Elizabethan romance "Shakespeare In Love." There is more love to warm the heart on Dec. 18 when Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan star in "You've Got Mail," the cyberspace follow-up to "Sleepless in Seattle." The radiowaves played matchmaker before: e-mail puts the two in touch this time.

Also on the 18th, DreamWorks debuts "Prince of Egypt," its version

of the Biblical exodus of Jews from Egypt. As with "ANTZ," the upstart studio again strikes at Disney but instead of computer graphics it puts a dagger to Disney's heart with "Prince's" own style of traditional, hand-drawn animation.

The Oscar wars open in earnest on Christmas Day starting with "The Thin Red Line," the first film by legendary director Terrence Malick since 1978's "Days of Heaven." Oscar watchers wonder if this gritty tale of soldiers in the World War II battle of Guadalcanal can compete with Steven Spielberg's summer smash "Saving Private Ryan." Travolta draws legal fire as a lawyer in "A Civil Action," based on the true story of eight Massachusetts families suing companies over pollution that led to cancer in their town.

Travolta needs a hit to redeem himself as a top box office draw after recent flops "Mad City" and "Primary Colours." In "Patch Adams," comedian Williams portrays a doctor who shook the medical world in the 1960s by using humour as a healing

tool. In March, Williams won his first Oscar for best supporting actor playing a therapist in "Good Will Hunting." "Down in the Delta," directed by poet and novelist Maya Angelou, tells the story of a drug-using single mother (Alfre Woodard) spending a summer with relatives rural Mississippi.

Another story of healing, "Stepmom," stars Sarandon as a cancer-stricken mom coming to grips with turning her children over to a bitter rival, her ex-husband's new wife (Roberts).

"Mighty Joe Young," an updated version of the 1949 movie of the same name, stars Bill Paxton as a zoologist who brings a huge African gorilla to a California zoo only to find it exploited. The 1949 movie won an Oscar for special effects.

Sean Penn and Kevin Spacey star as brooding, morally corrupt men in a movie of the award-winning play "Hurly Burly." Since Spacey already has one Oscar for "The Usual Suspects," talk in Hollywood is that Penn may finally win one, too.

# IMF defends interest rate policy, cites differences with World Bank

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A senior International Monetary Fund (IMF) official Monday publicly acknowledged that differences existed with the World Bank on the response to last year's Asian financial crisis.

The disagreement, which has become increasingly apparent to observers of the two Washington-based institutions, has centred on the IMF's preference for higher interest rates as a means of restoring investment confidence and stabilising currencies.

A World Bank report earlier this month argued that "some initial policy responses (in Asia) emphasised raising interest rates to stabilise exchange rates, but they did not succeed

immediately in correcting exchange rate undervaluation and exacerbated negative impacts on the real economies."

The thrust of the report was later reiterated by World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz at a controversial press conference here. Press interpretation of Stiglitz's comments prompted a follow-up statement by bank President James Wolfensohn denying any rift with the IMF.

At a press conference here Monday IMF Research Director Michael Mussa confirmed that there had been differences with the bank and defended the IMF's interest rate policy.

"It is clear that the World Bank, and in particular its chief economist Mr.

Stiglitz, has had a different assessment of the desirable policy responses at the time of the Asian crisis a year or more ago and has made that point on several occasions," he said.

"No doubt we understood that at the beginning of the crisis — in the summer of 1997 through the winter of 1998 — that a tightening of monetary policy, that is a raising of interest rates, was going to slow these economies," Mussa added.

"Tightened interest rates were seen as tough medicine. The issue is whether it was desirable. If you have cancer, chemotherapy won't make you feel better in the short term but it may nevertheless be essential for a successful cure," he explained.

Mussa argued that at the start of the crisis, the currencies of Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia were crumbling and "depreciating out of sight."

To stop the slide, "some firming in monetary conditions was deemed by us as an essential part of the policy package."

Mussa stressed that such an approach was necessary and noted that as Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia were returning to stability, interest rates had come back down.

The IMF has predicted that South Korea and Thailand, after plunging into deep recessions this year, could post "modest recoveries" in economic momentum in 1999.

## Ammari expects Jordan to post 2% growth this year

AMMAN — Planning Minister Nabil Ammari Tuesday expected the economic growth rate for 1998 to range between 2.2 and two per cent, based on the estimates for the third quarter for 1998.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced Monday that the gross domestic product (GDP) will drop from five per cent to 2.5 per cent.

Commenting on the IMF estimates, Ammari said he has no information about the IMF estimates, nor about the bases on which the fund has formulated its forecast.

A senior World Bank official said in Cairo early this month that Jordan's economic situation is difficult in light of the political and economic circumstances prevailing in the region.

Kamal Darwis, who heads the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa Desk, said countries of the region should achieve a growth rate of five per cent and above if they are to meet the challenges posed by the population growth and economic imbalances, and to reduce poverty and unemployment.

Darwis estimated the regional economic growth rates between 3.0 and 3.5 per cent for this year. He attributed the low growth rate to a drop in oil prices and economic recession.

The GDP in Jordan has dropped last year to 1.8 per cent as a result of the political circumstances in the region, the embargo on Iraq and the barriers put by Israel on Jordanian products destined for the West Bank and Gaza strip markets.

# Japan's finance minister proposes new global financial architecture

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa this week proposed to create a new financial architecture for greater currency stability in the global economy.

"It is our task to examine the possibility of creating an exchange regime that will bring about greater stability on the one hand and needed flexibility on the other, among the yen, the U.S. dollar and the euro," Miyazawa said.

"Although it is a difficult challenge, we have to work hard to attain this managed flexibility among the three currencies," he told a news

conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

Miyazawa said it might be "generally appropriate" for emerging and developing economies to peg their exchange rates to a currency or a basket of currencies.

Such countries were likely to benefit from controlling inflows of short-term capital to a "manageable level" despite some strong views against it, the finance minister said.

"I believe that there might be some cases that would justify the reintroduction of such measures, for instance, when

preventing IMF loan proceeds from being used to bail out foreign investors' money and when preventing capital flight by residents," Miyazawa added.

He said these controls should not be the norm and had to be exceptions, but short-term capital flows did not always provide effective allocation of resources as intended.

"Excessive capital inflows can lead to overheating of an economy, including increases in unproductive investments, asset price bubble and inflation," the finance minister indicated.

"And if outflows start, torrents of outgoing funds could ruin a nation's economy," he emphasised.

Miyazawa also called for an enhanced capacity of the international community to increase liquidity, which would provide an economy with "breathing space" for calming the market and considering necessary policy measures.

For that purpose the International Monetary Fund (IMF) needed a new facility and fundraising method to

boost liquidity, although he criticised it for requiring "too ambitious structural reforms" at a time of crisis.

"It might be advisable for the IMF to refrain from requiring too broad or too ambitious structural reforms," he said. "The IMF could create a new facility that would be precautionary as well as quick in disbursement when needed."

To increase the IMF's capacity to provide liquidity, Miyazawa said the organisation should be allowed to borrow in the markets as allowed by its charter.

He proposed the IMF augment countries' foreign reserves through a new allocation of supplemental reserve facility, a precautionary measure currently under consideration.

The IMF could also set up "regional currency support mechanisms," he said.

"These mechanisms, which could be established in each region such as Asia, Latin America and eastern Europe, would be funded by countries in the region that are strongly interdependent on each other."

Exchange Rates Monday, 21-12-98 ACCESS 4648888

CURRENCY	JORDAN	SAUDI	U.A.E.	QATAR	YEMEN	OMAN	YEMEN	OMAN	YEMEN	OMAN
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1836	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1544	2.3490	0.2077	0.2077	0.2077
SAUDI RIAL	5.3008	1.0000	0.1215	9.8541	9.7481	1.0308	12.4519	1.1010	1.1010	1.1010
U.A.E. DIRHAM	5.1933	0.9790	1.0000	9.7448	9.5429	1.0089	12.1884	1.0778	1.0778	1.0778
QATAR RIAL	4.9146	0.9283	0.9278	9.7994	9.7929	1.0000	12.2733	1.1109	1.1109	1.1109
YEMEN RIAL	0.5438	0.1026	0.1048	1.0211	1.0211	1.0000	12.0818	1.0804	1.0804	1.0804
OMAN RIAL	5.1434	0.9703	0.9912	9.8584	9.4584	1.0000	12.0818	1.0804	1.0804	1.0804
YEMEN RIAL	0.4237	0.0803	0.0820	0.7994	0.7829	0.0828	1.0000	0.9884	0.9884	0.9884
YEMEN RIAL	4.9146	0.9283	0.9278	9.7994	9.7929	1.0000	12.2733	1.1109	1.1109	1.1109
YEMEN RIAL	21.4831	4.0538	4.1389	40.3216	39.5065	4.1769	50.4628	4.4621	4.4621	4.4621
YEMEN RIAL	1.4124	0.2685	0.2722	2.6523	2.5974	0.2746	3.3177	0.2934	0.2934	0.2934
YEMEN RIAL	0.8399	0.1585	0.1619	1.5773	1.5448	0.1633	1.9730	0.1748	0.1748	0.1748
YEMEN RIAL	2.3510	0.4435	0.4530	4.4148	4.3334	0.4571	5.5224	0.4835	0.4835	0.4835
YEMEN RIAL	1.9081	0.3596	0.3673	3.5793	3.5062	0.3706	4.4773	0.3969	0.3969	0.3969
YEMEN RIAL	7.8558	1.4875	1.5198	14.8078	14.5013	1.5332	18.5228	1.6379	1.6379	1.6379
YEMEN RIAL	1.5309	0.3077	0.3143	3.0676	2.9982	0.3171	3.9310	0.3388	0.3388	0.3388
YEMEN RIAL	2.6497	0.4999	0.5108	4.9757	4.8727	0.5152	6.2241	0.5504	0.5504	0.5504
YEMEN RIAL	11.2970	2.1312	2.1770	21.2140	20.7748	2.1984	26.5363	2.3464	2.3464	2.3464
YEMEN RIAL	23.2639	4.3925	4.4969	43.7233	42.8182	4.5270	54.8828	4.8362	4.8362	4.8362
YEMEN RIAL	48.4915	9.1479	9.3448	91.0591	89.1740	9.4280	113.9048	10.0719	10.0719	10.0719
YEMEN RIAL	2.2592	0.4318	0.4411	4.2987	4.2087	0.4451	5.3772	0.4755	0.4755	0.4755
YEMEN RIAL	3.8482	0.7448	0.7608	7.4140	7.2605	0.7676	9.2741	0.9793	0.9793	0.9793
YEMEN RIAL	2.8838	0.5083	0.5171	5.0384	4.9351	0.5218	6.3037	0.5574	0.5574	0.5574
YEMEN RIAL	16.5396	3.1202	3.1873	31.0585	30.4169	3.2157	39.8507	3.4335	3.4335	3.4335
YEMEN RIAL	2.1870	0.4128	0.4214	4.1058	4.0218	0.4252	5.1372	0.4542	0.4542	0.4542
YEMEN RIAL	1.1885	0.2257	0.2305	2.2458	2.2003	0.2326	2.8105	0.2985	0.2985	0.2985

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	YEN	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	SPAIN	UK	SWITZERLAND
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8816	0.6008	0.7410	0.1791	0.8960	0.8330	0.0891	1.1905	1.9300
EURO	0.5307	1.0000	0.3573	0.4407	0.1088	0.5150	0.3170	0.0374	0.7020	1.0600
YEN	1.6459	2.7990	1.0000	1.2534	0.3981	1.4415	0.9873	0.1071	1.9464	2.7990
FRANCE	1.1905	2.2592	0.8108	1.0000	0.2417	1.1887	0.7193	0.1882	1.5931	2.2592
GERMANY	5.5530	9.3854	3.3542	4.1371	1.0000	4.8390	2.9760	0.3672	6.9907	9.3854
ITALY	115.4700	194.1744	69.3722	85.5650	20.6824	1.0000	61.5512	700.4550	136.3124	194.1744
NETHERLANDS	1.8790	3.1547	1.1271	1.3901	0.3360	0.6247	1.0000	1.13000	2.2148	3.1547
SPAIN	7.9593	13.4489	4.8052	5.9265	1.4326	5.6267	4.2636	0.5197	9.4568	13.4489
UK	16.4550	27.7212	9.9208	12.1150	2.9277	14.2784	9.7873	1.0000	19.4600	27.7212
SWITZERLAND	34.3320	57.7327	20.6290	25.4405	6.1494	29.7324	19.3006	206.7021	40.5388	57.7327
AUSTRALIA	1.6207	2.7254	0.9737	1.2010	0.2803	1.4036	0.8638	0.9316	1.9133	2.7254
NEW ZEALAND	2.7953	4.7005	1.6794	2.0714	0.5007	2.4208	1.4900	18.9598	3.2988	4.7005
CYPRUS	1.9000	3.1850	1.1415	1.4078	0.3403	1.8454	1.0728	11.5258	2.2430	3.1850
AUSTRIA	11.7101	19.6915	7.0357	8.6773	2.0514	10.1412	6.3240	71.0343	13.6203	19.6915
CANADA	1.5484	2.6038	0.8302	1.1474	0.2773	1.3410	0.8254	0.9628	1.8279	2.6038
EURO	0.8471	1.4245	0.5089	0.6277	0.1517	0.7336	0.4515	0.5188	1.0000	1.4245

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	EURO	YEN	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	SPAIN	UK	SWITZERLAND
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8816	0.6008	0.7410	0.1791	0.8960	0.8330	0.0891	1.1905	1.9300
EURO	0.5307	1.0000	0.3573	0.4407	0.1088	0.5150	0.3170	0.0374	0.7020	1.0600
YEN	1.6459	2.7990	1.0000	1.2534	0.3981	1.4415	0.9873	0.1071	1.9464	2.7990
FRANCE	1.1905	2.2592	0.8108	1.0000	0.2417	1.1887	0.7193	0.1882	1.5931	2.2592
GERMANY	5.5530	9.3854	3.3542	4.1371	1.0000	4.8390	2.9760	0.3672	6.9907	9.3854
ITALY	115.4700	194.1744	69.3722	85.5650	20.6824	1.0000	61.5512	700.4550	136.3124	194.1744
NETHERLANDS	1.8790	3.1547	1.1271	1.3901	0.3360	0.6247	1.0000	1.13000	2.2148	3.1547
SPAIN	7.9593	13.4489	4.8052	5.9265	1.4326	5.6267	4.2636	0.5197	9.4568	13.4489
UK	16.4550	27.7212	9.9208	12.1150	2.9277	14.2784	9.7873	1.0000	19.4600	27.7212
SWITZERLAND	34.3320	57.7327	20.6290	25.4405	6.1494	29.7324	19.3006	206.7021	40.5388	57.7327
AUSTRALIA	1.6207	2.7254	0.9737	1.2010	0.2803	1.4036	0.8638	0.9316	1.9133	2.7254
NEW ZEALAND	2.7953	4.7005	1.6794	2.0714	0.5007	2.4208	1.4900	18.9598	3.2988	4.7005
CYPRUS	1.9000	3.1850	1.1415	1.4078	0.3403	1.8454	1.0728	11.5258	2.2430	3.1850
AUSTRIA	11.7101	19.6915	7.0357	8.6773	2.0514	10.1412	6.3240	71.0343	13.6203	19.6915
CANADA	1.5484	2.6038	0.8302	1.1474	0.2773	1.3410	0.8254	0.9628	1.8279	2.6038
EURO	0.8471	1.4245	0.5089	0.6277	0.1517	0.7336	0.4515	0.5188	1.0000	1.4245

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE
FRANKFURT	DAX	4723.81	4683.45	40.36
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10028.23	10083.31	142.92
LONDON	FTSE 100	5741.80	5685.20	56.60
NEW YORK	DJ INDEX	8883.63	8875.82	77.81
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	572.06	570.15	1.91
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	651.25	650.43	0.82
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1186.03	1179.38	6.65
TOKYO	NIKKEI-225	14152.50	14194.29	-41.74
PARIS	CAC 40	3851.89	3791.17	-60.72
FRANKFURT	COMMERZBANK	4406.50	4414.20	-7.70

PRECIOUS METALS

METAL	ASK	BID
GOLD	289.30	289.30
SILVER	4.36	4.36
PLATINUM	348.00	348.00

## Hong Kong's economy hits new low

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's recession-hit economy shrank by 7.0 per cent in the three months to September in its worst quarterly performance on record, officials have said and warned that the outlook was bleak.

Announcing the figures, government economist Tang Kwong-yiu said that the current recession was even deeper

er than during the oil crisis in 1975.

"I do not think we can talk about a revival this year," he said.

Financial Secretary Donald Tsang said it had been a "depressing" three months. It was the worst quarterly performance by the economy on record.

But Tsang said Hong Kong's economic fundamentals remained strong

and there were signs of increased market activity.

The third-quarter contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) from the figure a year ago followed a shrinkage of 5.2 per cent in the second quarter and 2.7 per cent in the first which plunged Hong Kong into its first recession for 13 years.

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P.O. Box 7676 Amman - Jordan

**THE Daily Crossword** Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS

- Equal scores
- Beethoven's "Für"
- Practical jokes
- United
- Emirates
- Pie nut
- of Cleves
- THE BEST
- Lamprey
- Nonsensical
- Consecrate
- Picnic pest
- Penultimate
- Greek letter
- THE BEST
- Markov's targets
- Writer/singer
- Leonard
- Alacolo assent
- By mouth
- Spread here and there
- Highland honey
- Lawyer: abbr.
- Odius
- Bloody passage
- THE BEST
- Knack
- Lend a hand
- Out in the open
- Scour
- Health retreat
- THE BEST
- Pain in the neck
- Nonresonant metallic sound
- Painful
- City in Spain
- Secret messages
- Flock females

DOWN

- Bandage
- Wrath of the Romans
- British peer
- Mom-a-pop store grp.
- Word derived from a name
- Singer Home
- Religious image
- Vault
- Letter carrier: abbr.
- Onionlike bulb
- Poker stake
- Wildbeests
- Understands
- Desert monsters
- "A Doll's House" playwright
- Plummeted
- I'm glad that's over!
- blanche
- Rodeo rope
- Group of eight
- Out into view
- "We hold truths to be..."
- Lion's plains
- Foras out
- City on the Arno
- Genesis character
- Genie
- Demote for service
- Call back
- Novo, Benin
- Mystery story?
- Cloud over
- Makes
- waterlight
- Translucent gem
- Evil behavior
- Call back
- Normandy town
- Landlocked African nation
- Clair or Coty
- Pack cargo
- Mare's male
- God of war
- Broadcast watchdog agcy.
- Half a fly?

**Peanuts**

GO BACK TO SLEEP. THERE'S A BLIZZARD OUTSIDE AND ALL THE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED.

POETRY!

**Andy Capp**

I'VE BEEN ADMIRING YOU FROM A DISTANCE. DEAR, MAY I BUY YOU A DRINK AND ADVISE A LITTLE CLOSER?

LIGHT!

POOR LITTLE DEVIL! HE FINDS IT EASY TO SEE A CHARIOT, BUT NOT SO EASY TO LOOK LIKE ONE.

**Mutt'n'Jeff**

JEFF, I JUST GOT HIRED! I



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Government intends to raise fine to JD3 for maids who do not renew work permits

**THERE IS** an intention to raise the fine imposed on maids for delaying the renewal of their work permits from JD1 per day to JD3 in order to control the process, informed sources told Al Ra'i Arabic daily. According to Omar Khamash, the manager of the office entrusted with the task of rectifying the situation of guest workers, there are between 35,000 and 50,000 maids in Jordan. "Most of them pay the JD1 fine a day or JD330 a year instead of renewing their work permits," he said. "Around 40 per cent of the maids have rectified their situation."

Khamash indicated that the number of guest workers who have called on the office during November was sharply below the numbers that rushed to the office during the previous two months to rectify their legal situation in the Kingdom. He attributed the big fall to a wrong belief among guest workers that the government may loosen its strict measures against non-Jordanian workers.

He stressed that such a belief is wrong pointing out that a package of measures will be carried out from the beginning of next year to activate the process and implement it to its full end in order to have the situation of guest workers fully legalised. "There is no reason or excuse for the guest workers not to rectify their

situation because at the end there is no escape from going through the process," he emphasised noting that "it is better for them to rectify their situation now before finding themselves entangled in legal procedures which will be enforced on all violators."

The labour official indicated that out of a million guest workers working in the Kingdom only 117,000 labourers have rectified their situation in line with Jordanian regulations. The number compares with 135,000 workers who adjusted their situation during the same period of last year when the government did not even launch a campaign to force the guest workers to abide by the work and residence regulations.

Rasem Sheikh Yaseen, a private petition clerk who has his desk in front of the office, said: "When the campaign started there used to be around 500 labourers coming here each day to adjust their situation but now the number does not exceed 20 workers each day." He attributed the big drop to some expectations that the campaign will stop at some point and to the fact that some labourers are in legal violations that, should they come to rectify their situation, they may be asked to leave the country (Al Ra'i).

### Jordanian-Pakistani joint venture inaugurated in Karachi

**AMMAN (J.T.)** — Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, last week inaugurated a joint venture between the Jordan Fertilizer Company Ltd. and FFC, a Pakistani Company at Bin Qasim in Karachi.

The project, which has a 10 per cent Jordanian equity envisages annual production capacities of 445,000 metric tons of DAP and 551,000 metric tons of urea for the domestic use in Pakistan.

The total investment cost of the project is \$370 million.

Phosphoric acid 210,000 tons per annum for this project shall be totally supplied by Jordan Phosphate Mines

Company, which will consume about 750,000 tons of Jordanian rock phosphate.

FFC and Fauji Foundation have 40 per cent of the equity and the remaining capital will be subscribed by renowned international financial institution besides Pakistani institution and general public.

Trade between Pakistan and Jordan will remarkably increase, leaving FFC as one of Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. largest trading partners.

Sameh Madani, managing director of Jordan Phosphate Mines Company Ltd. attended the inauguration ceremony.

### Volvo, shedding 5,300 jobs, says: 'We have to make more money'

**STOCKHOLM (AFP)** — Volvo has announced the shedding of 5,300 jobs to improve internal efficiency and strengthen competitiveness, but stressed that the cuts were part of structural changes rather than a response to weakness in global markets.

Volvo, a Swedish auto group, is to shed 5,300 jobs and also dismiss 700 consultants in the first half year of 1999 to save three billion kronor (\$390 million) annually.

Most of the measures are structural, and a consequence of a plan in December 1997 focusing on global growth, product renewal and internal efficiency, the group said.

"Volvo has to enhance profitability — we need to make more money," Volvo's press officer Mats Edenberg told AFP.

The profitability rise is crucial for the goal to spend 20 billion kronor annually on product development and investments, Edenberg said.

The car division receives most attention within Volvo, but Edenberg said that Volvo had been active in developing heavy trucks, buses and marine and industrial products.

"We have already implemented our growth and product renewal strategies. Now the next step is to improve internal efficiency," Edenberg said. "We have simply found that we can work in a more efficient way."

Volvo said that the state of the markets following the financial crisis in Asia, though not at all the main reason behind the measures, had caused it to accelerate restructuring.

Press reports have for some time speculated on harsh cost-cutting plans and

redundancies at Volvo, but the group had not announced any large-scale job cuts recently.

About 2,600 of the 5,300 employees affected work in Sweden, 1,100 in Europe, 1,000 in North America, and 600 in the rest of the world. The measures concern 3,100 so-called white-collar jobs, and 2,200 manual workers.

The company said early and natural retirements were seen as an alternative to redundancies.

Details of provisions to meet the costs involved were not provided.

Certain business divisions will be hit especially hard, for example Volvo Construction Equipment, which alone will cut 900 jobs.

Edenberg said that Volvo had been very active in seeking to make acquisitions, and was open to various types of alliances and cooperation, such as one with Mitsubishi in the Netherlands, where the two groups have a joint factory.

"Cooperation with other companies is vital for us in the future," Edenberg said, without specifying the group's plans further.

Sweden will not be a founding member of the euro when the European single currency is launched on Jan. 1, but the Volvo group has to prepare for the launch of the single currency.

"We have a lot of activities that will be within the euro-zone, and we need to be able to handle the euro as a commercial currency," Edenberg said.

Volvo has 73,000 employees world-wide, 44,000 of which in Sweden, and is also well established in Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States and Brazil.

### Study compares prices in European countries

**BRUSSELS (AFP)** — Britain is overall the most expensive EU country for consumer goods, while Germany is generally the cheapest, according to a study by the Belgian consumer association Test-Achats.

A comparison of 2,500 shops in 10 European Union (EU) countries found that Britain topped the table for high prices, receiving a rating of 124 by the association, while Germany was given 100 and France

107. Differences between the prices for specific items, however, meant clever shoppers should choose their destination to get the best deal.

Spain, for instance, was the best place to find clothes, toys and tennis rackets. The Netherlands was attractive for stereos and televisions. Belgium was ideal for perfumes.

France had good prices for calculators and personal organisers.

Portugal was the cheapest for photographic film and sports shoes.

Austria was a good country to pick up video and automatic cameras.

Test-Achats said it will become easy for shoppers to see for themselves the differences in prices in the euro zone when the single currency comes into being on Jan. 1, and urged traders to post prices in euros as soon as possible.

### 900 oil wells drilled in Iran since 1979 revolution

**TEHRAN (AFP)** — Iran, the world's second largest oil producer, has drilled about 900 oil wells on its territory since the 1979 Islamic revolution, the National Iranian Oil Drilling Company (NIOC) said here Tuesday.

"The company was created in 1979 on the orders of the founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini, and since then it has drilled about 900 wells and maintained or repaired another 420," added Heidar Bahmani, the company's managing director. The NIOC is "entirely self-sufficient and can begin drilling work anywhere in the country or abroad," he was quoted by local newspapers.

He confirmed the company is currently carrying out drilling in Turkmenistan where it has dug a 950-metre well and where "work is continuing."

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami called last week for the modernisation of the Iranian oil industry and the discovery of new oil fields in the country, which depends on the sale of oil for 80 per cent of its hard currency revenues.

A.F.M. TRADE Monday, 21-12-98

ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open	Close	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB BK	215.000	213.000	-0.93%
INTL BK	1.550	1.530	-1.29%
CAIRO AMMAN BK	2.440	2.560	+4.92%
BK. OF JO	1.350	1.330	-1.48%
THE HOUSING BK	2.700	2.700	0.00%
JO. GULF BK	0.690	0.670	-2.90%
EDMON BK	1.020	1.070	+4.90%
JO. INVS. & FIN. BK	1.450	1.450	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.570	0.570	0.00%

**BANKS INDEX** 278.320 point = -0.75%

<b>SERVICES</b>			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.460	1.460	0.00%
ARAB INT'L HOTELS	4.750	4.750	0.00%
JO. INT'L TRADING CENT	0.310	0.300	-3.23%
AL-RAT	5.400	5.300	-1.85%
COMMODORE	1.150	1.150	0.00%
ARAB INT'L. FOR INVS. &	1.930	1.920	-0.52%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.120	1.120	0.00%
UNITED FOR FINANCIAL I	1.070	1.110	+3.74%

**SERVICES INDEX** 106.310 point = -0.28%

<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3.150	3.120	-0.95%
PHOSPHATE	1.490	1.490	0.00%
ARAB POTASH	3.000	3.000	0.00%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.150	10.150	0.00%
WOOLLEN IND	1.140	1.200	+5.26%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.580	2.550	-1.16%
CERAMIC IND	1.110	1.110	0.00%
JO. DAIRY	2.800	2.850	+1.79%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.230	1.220	-0.81%
PAPER & CARDBOARD	2.040	2.000	-1.96%
THE PUBLIC MINING	1.680	1.760	+4.76%
DAR AL DAWA	4.580	4.570	-0.20%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
JO. STEEL	0.980	0.990	+1.02%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.910	0.950	+4.39%
ROCKWOOL	0.340	0.350	+2.94%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.150	1.120	-2.61%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.390	0.390	0.00%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHAR	1.180	1.170	-0.85%
LAUNDRY	0.410	0.390	-4.88%
EL-ZAY	1.270	1.280	+0.79%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.630	0.620	-1.59%
FOOD FACTORIES	0.950	1.000	+5.26%
IND. RESOURCES	0.470	0.480	+2.13%
NEW CAPLES	0.620	0.620	0.00%
INTL ALUMINIUM	0.700	0.700	0.00%

**INDUSTRY INDEX** 78.040 point = -0.38%

<b>PARALLEL</b>			
EXPORT BK (75	0.860	0.860	0.00%
ARAB GERMAN INS	1.000	1.000	0.00%
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.390	0.390	+2.63%
CENTRAL STORG	0.330	0.350	+6.06%
JO. INT'L INS	0.670	0.700	+4.48%
UNION INVS. CORP.	0.700	0.700	0.00%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.560	0.550	-1.79%
TAL - SHARO	0.950	0.950	0.00%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.360	0.380	+5.56%
ARAB INT'L. TRADE	0.230	0.220	-4.35%
OPTICAL & AUDIAL	0.470	0.490	+4.26%
CENTURY	1.200	1.190	-0.83%
INAMCO	0.270	0.270	0.00%
TEXTILE & PLASTIC	0.250	0.250	0.00%
AL-RAZI	0.650	0.630	-3.08%
UNITED ENG. IND	0.210	0.210	0.00%
INTL CERAMIC	0.400	0.400	0.00%
INTL TEXTILE MANU	0.190	0.190	0.00%
ZARA	1.200	1.260	+5.00%
NUTRI DAR	0.710	0.690	-2.82%
ARAB JO. INVS	0.930	0.930	0.00%

**GRAND INDEX** 168.98 point = -0.63%

### HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) Don't let your social life interfere with something you're supposed to do. Sometimes when you get to talking with your friends, everything else disappears. Is there homework you need to do by tomorrow, or some chore you've been putting off? You'll have to kick into high gear to get everything done, so enjoy yourself, but don't ditch out completely.

**Taurus** (April 20 to May 20) Looks like you have time to play. There are a few little things that still need to be handled, but don't worry about them. There will always be things like that. If there weren't, you'd be the one most likely to think them up. You can always find a way to fill up time.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 21) An older person has chores for you, and it would be to your advantage to comply. You'll still be offering brilliant suggestions, of course. That's one of your trademarks. Anyone you work for can count on having problems solved. You're learning as well as teaching. Relax and follow your intuition. You look marvellous.

**CANCER** (June 22 to July 22) You'll be coming up against more work that needs to be done. A brilliant idea you have could get you the rest of the week off. This is not an excuse. It's a way to get the job done even if you're not there. Present a solution, not a new problem, and you could get what you want.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) You and your buddy need to pool your resources today and go shopping. By sharing your purchasing power, and a few of your purchasing decisions, you'll make a brilliant showing. And even if you don't have all the money in the world, at least you can appear so, by being generous beyond your means.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) There's a different kind of challenge to face today. The easy part is the love. There's plenty of that to go around. The difficult part is a disagreement with another person. You are so much about this person that whatever squabbles you have could be ignored. Today, they could even be empowering for you both.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 23) You're busy at your job, but you might be hampered by emotions being stirred up. Will everything turn out as you hope? Will you do a good job? Will others feel nurtured and supported and loved? Well, if you stop worrying about it, your odds of achieving your goal increase enormously. Just relax and have a great time.

**SCORPIO** (October 24 to November 21) You and another person have gotten back in touch with your love. That's important in any relationship, but especially in this one. You two are so close, when you have a disagreement it upsets you both for days. Let bygones be bygones and move ahead. Think about what you're going to accomplish rather than what you've already done.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) You can save money by doing something around the house. Just don't make a bigger problem than the one you're trying to fix. Listen to instructions from an expert and you'll do it right. How hard can it be? Other people do it, don't they? A neighbour or sibling will be a big help. Let them know when you're up to it.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) You're strong and decisive, but also compassionate and helpful. That's a great combination. You don't have to tell everybody, but it's not as hard as it looks for you to put on a brilliant performance. You already know the story by heart. Now all you have to do is act it out again, with a few more flourishes.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) You may be trying to figure out what other people want, and that's not the easiest thing for an Aquarius to do. You can figure out what other people need, or what they should be doing, but knowing what they want is different. Ask a Pisces for help. Pisceans have a natural knack for this kind of thing.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) This day starts out a little rough, but gets better as it goes along. Whatever mess you have to deal with should be solved quickly, once you pay attention to it. Then you get to be creative, and that's where you really shine. You've always believed that anything is possible; today you'll start figuring out how to make it happen.

### Shell chairman says new job losses will run into thousands

**LONDON (AFP)** — The chairman of Anglo-Dutch oil giant Royal Dutch Shell has said that thousands more jobs would be shed on top of the 4,000 it announced last month.

Mark Moody-Stuart told the BBC in an interview that the lay-offs were due to the continuing slump in world oil prices, and promised that the process of shedding jobs would be done "in a humane way."

In November, while reporting third-quarter results for 1998, the oil

giant announced that by the end of 1999 some 3,000 jobs would be axed in Europe and the United States, and another 1,000 in Japan.

Moody-Stuart said the further losses would run into "thousands rather than hundreds."

"These are spread all around the world. As always with Shell, we will try to act in a humane way taking into account the needs of the individual people in the individual countries," he added.

His comments to the

BBC expanded on remarks the company was unveiling a \$4.7 billion business plan, when he warned there would be more than the 4,000 losses announced last month but gave no figure.

Shell, Europe's biggest company, said nearly all the exceptional charges, up to \$4.5 billion, would be felt in the fourth quarter of this year, and the restructuring would mean the disposal of 40 per cent of its chemicals business.

It said in a statement

that drastic cost-cutting measures outlined in the plan were vital "in response to the difficult environment seen this year and expected to continue through the coming years."

Moody-Stuart said the plan, which seeks to save \$2.5 billion a year by 2001, would succeed in "clearing out the cupboard."

The company has some 105,000 employees throughout the world.

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# Zidane named European Footballer of the Year

PARIS (AFP) — Zinedine Zidane was on Monday named the European Footballer of the Year for an eventful 1998 which saw him help France win the World Cup.

The 26-year-old talented midfielder, who scored with two headers in the 3-0 final victory over Brazil, was the fourth Frenchman to win the award after Real Madrid's Raymond Kopa in 1958, Juventus' Michel Platini from 1983 to 1985 and Marseille's Jean-Pierre Papin in 1991.

"I am proud and happy to succeed many football greats in receiving this honour," said Zidane in a ceremony screened live at the studios of television station France 2 on Monday evening.

"I owe this honour to the teams of France and Juventus. Without them, I would not have been able to achieve so much. With seven French players in the first 20, it shows that the whole French team had a great World Cup."

The World Cup's top scorer Davor Suker of Croatia and Real Madrid was second with 1997 winner Brazilian Ronaldo in third spot in this annual award organised by bi-weekly magazine France Football.

Then came England and Liverpool's talented 19-year-old striker Michael Owen in fourth spot just ahead of Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Rivaldo and striker Gabriel Batistuta of Italian league leaders Fiorentina.

This award, until 1994 only open to European players, was widened to include any player of any nationality playing in a European league from the 1995 edition, won by AC Milan's Liberian international George Weah.

Zidane, his World Cup win apart, also helped Juventus reach their third European Cup final in a row, though they lost 1-0 to Real Madrid.

Zidane, who earned a UEFA Cup runners-up medal for Bordeaux in 1996, grew up in the Marseille suburbs after his family came to France from Algeria in the 1960s.

Zidane first played for France in August 1994 as a substitute against the Czech Republic where he hit both goals in a 2-2 draw.

However Zidane had a poor Euro 96 in England because of tiredness after a very busy domestic season.

He qualified with Bordeaux for the UEFA Cup from the pre-season Intertoto Cup and then went all the way to the final. With other domestic fixtures, Zidane was exhausted at the end of the season. France eventually lost on penalties to the Czech Republic in the Euro 96 semi-final.

Zidane's experience with Juventus stood him in good stead for his international career, which was to reach such a climax at the Stade de



Frenchman Zinedine Zidane poses with his trophy after being named the European Footballer of the Year for an eventful 1998 which saw him help France win the World Cup. The 26-year-old talented midfielder was the fourth Frenchman to win the award after Real Madrid's Raymond Kopa, Juventus' Michel Platini and Marseille's Jean-Pierre Papin (AFP photo)



Picture dated 12 July shows French national soccer team's midfielder Zinedine Zidane, at the Stade de France near Paris, after the team won the World Cup 98. World champion Zidane will according to all predictions receive 21 December the French "Golden Ball 98" award, a French award consecrating the best European soccer player of the year, last given to Brazilian Ronaldo (AFP photo)

France at St Denis, just north of Paris, on July 12.

Zidane was sent off in France's second World Cup group game for stamping on a Saudi Arabian player, which earned an automatic two-match ban.

He sat out their final group game against Denmark and the second round game against Paraguay, where France only managed to win 1-0 thanks to an extra-time golden goal.

Following the Paraguay game, Zidane came out to celebrate at the Felix-

Bollaert stadium in Lens with the French squad, knowing he would be back for the quarter-finals.

France won a penalty shootout against Italy, then beat Croatia in the semi-finals, and Zidane's game was getting better and better as the tournament progressed.

Zidane has not only become a football legend, he also gets heaps of post from adoring female fans who have taken him to their hearts.

A quiet, pensive character off the pitch, in contrast to his high-profile status while playing football, he has a different type of star quality to former World Cup heroes.

Known as "Yaz" to those close to him, he has never forgotten his roots and still has many friends in Marseille.

He believes it is his close family and friends who have helped him keep his feet on the ground despite his incredible footballing success and he dedicated this award to them.

## European Footballers of the Year 1988-98

PARIS (AFP) — Leading placings for the European Footballer of the Year over the past ten seasons:

1988:

1. Marco Van Basten (Ned, AC Milan)
2. Roud Gullit (Ned, AC Milan)
3. Rijkaard (Ned, AC Milan)

1989:

1. Marco Van Basten (Ned, AC Milan)
2. Franco Baresi (Ita, AC Milan)
3. Rijkaard (Ned, AC Milan)

1990:

1. Lothar Matthaus (Ger, Inter Milan)
2. Toto Schillaci (Ita, Juventus)
3. Andreas Brehme (Ger, Inter Milan)

1991:

1. Jean-Pierre Papin (Fra, Marseille)
2. Lothar Matthaus (Ger, Inter)
- Darko Pancev and Dejan Savicevic (Yug, Red Star Belgrade)

1992:

1. Marco Van Basten (Milan AC)
2. Hristo Stoichkov (Bul, Barcelona)
3. Denis Bergkamp (Ned, Ajax)

1993:

1. Roberto Baggio (Ita, Juventus)
2. Dennis Bergkamp (Ned, Inter Milan)
3. Eric Cantona (Fra, Manchester United)

1994:

1. Hristo Stoichkov (Spa, Barcelona)
2. Roberto Baggio (Ita, Juventus)
3. Paolo Maldini (Ita, AC Milan)

1995:

1. George Weah (Lib, AC Milan)
2. Jurgen Klinsmann (Ger, Bayern Munich)
3. Jari Litmanen (Fin, Ajax)

1996:

1. Matthias Sammer (Ger, Borussia Dortmund)
2. Ronaldo (Bra, Barcelona)
3. Alan Shearer (Eng, Newcastle)

1997:

1. Ronaldo (Bra, Inter)
2. Predrag Mijatovic (Yug, Real Madrid)
3. Zinedine Zidane (Fra, Juventus)

1998:

1. Zinedine Zidane (Fra, Juventus)
2. Davor Suker (Cro, Real Madrid)
3. Ronaldo (Bra, Inter)

Aston Villa's Julian Joachim (C) clashes with Charlton Athletic goalkeeper Sasa Ilic (on ground) during their FA Premiership clash at The Valley stadium in London. Aston Villa defeated Charlton 1-0 (AFP photo)



## Broncos enjoy near-perfect year at the top

WASHINGTON (AFP) — From dethroning Green Bay in January's Super Bowl to a record-matching 18th consecutive victory in December, the Denver Broncos dominated American football in 1998.

John Elway finally delivered Denver a National Football League crown in his fourth trip to the title game, beating the Packers 31-24 as the American Conference snapped a 13-game Super Bowl losing streak.

Elway, 38, decided against retirement and helped direct Denver to a 13-0 start of the current season, equaling an NFL mark with 18 overall triumphs in a row before the Broncos lost to the New York Giants on December 13.

"Our main goal is to try and win another world championship," Elway said. "The streak just came along with that. Our goals are still out there. Now we just regroup and go on."

Elway, in his 16th pro season, was injured much of the season but still joined Dan Marino as the only quarterbacks to throw for more than 50,000 yards in their NFL careers.

Elway achieved his championship dream in large part because of Terrell Davis, who was 10 years old when Elway began his NFL career.

In the Super Bowl, Davis rushed for 157 yards and three touchdowns, all on one-yard runs, to earn Most Valuable Player honours and followed up this season by leading all rushers and flirting with more NFL history.

Through 14 games in the 1998 season, Davis had 1,801 yards on 347 carries, leaving him 304 yards shy of Eric Dickerson's 1984 NFL record with two games remaining.

Two of Davis' five-best career performances came this season against NFL playoff contenders, with 208 yards on 30 carries against Seattle in

October and 191 yards on 23 carries against Dallas in September.

Tom Nalen and Mark Schlereth led an offensive line that has protected Elway and opened holes for Davis, while Rod Smith, Ed McCaffery and tight end Shannon Sharpe give Elway prime receiving threats.

"This is as good as it gets," Sharpe said. "I can't see it being better anyplace else. I could make more money with another team. But how long would I last? And how many games would I win?"

Coach Mike Shanahan, nicknamed "The Mastermind," is the architect of

after 11 frustrating seasons with Philadelphia.

"The time off gave him peace of mind," Tampa Bay coach Tony Dungy said. "He has to be the MVP of this league."

Veteran receivers Cris Carter and Jake Reed combined with rookie Randy Moss and 1,000-yard rusher Robert Smith to make Minnesota a legitimate threat to reach the Super Bowl for the first time since 1977.

The Vikings and Buffalo have the worst showings in Super Bowl history, each going 0-4. The Bills blew their chances in a row from 1991 to

## NFL IN REVIEW

Denver's success. His push for flawlessness since his 1995 arrival made the Broncos the NFL's most potent offense.

"That's what Mike is about, demanding perfection in every part of the game," linebacker Bill Romanowski said.

But as Green Bay's title revival after three decades was short-lived, Denver's time at the top could be brief thanks to another team with an even longer history of suffering — the Minnesota Vikings.

The Vikings equalled Denver at mid-December with a 13-1 mark, having replaced the Broncos as the NFL's most powerful offence and the Packers as NFC Central division champions.

Randall Cunningham, a 35-year-old quarterback who had retired in 1996, took command when Brad Johnson was injured and surpassed Elway's as the NFL's top-rated passer.

Not bad for a man who two years ago was cutting granite and marble for fancy bathrooms and kitchens

1994. But the Minnesota legacy dates from defeats in 1970, 1974, 1975 and 1977.

Minnesota's South African veteran Gary Anderson made some NFL history by making 34 field goal kicks in a row, including a 6-for-6 performance against Baltimore on December 13, and could carry the streak into the playoffs.

The NFL's big surprise in 1998 was Atlanta, which joined Minnesota and perennial powers San Francisco, Dallas and Green Bay as an NFC threat.

The Falcons, self-dubbed "Dirty Birds," have got 2,890 passing yards from quarterback Chris Chandler and 1,596 rushing yards from Jamal Anderson, his third consecutive 1,000-yard season.

Detroit and Washington slumped from winning to losing campaigns, but the NFL's big disappointment was Kansas City, a 13-3 club in 1997 that went on a six-game losing spree to fall out of championship contention.

## AP 1998 top sports stories

LONDON (AP) — The top 10 sports stories of 1998, based on a global poll of Associated Press world service subscribers. Points are awarded on a declining scale, ranging from 10 for first place to one for 10th place (first place votes in parentheses):

1. France stuns Brazil to win World Cup — 639 (45)
2. Doping scandals wreck Tour de France — 369 (7)
3. Mika Hakkinen wins Formula One title — 289 (4)
4. Mystery over Ronaldo as Brazil flops in World Cup final — 243 (6)

5. Olympic sprinter Florence Griffith Joyner dies suddenly — 204

6. Michael Jordan leads Chicago Bulls to third straight NBA title and sixth in last eight years, ponders retirement — 143

7. Rupert Murdoch bids \$1 billion for Manchester United — 124

8. Nagano Olympics — 108 (1)

9. NBA lockout threatens 1998-99 season — 105 (1)

10. (tie), Pete Sampras finishes No. 1 in men's tennis rankings for record sixth straight year; Bjorn Dahlie sets Winter Olympics record with eight career gold medals — 102

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	Kurt Russel & Martin Short .. in <b>CAPTAIN RON</b>	Tim Allen & Kristie Alley .. in <b>FOR RICHER OR POORER</b>	Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in <b>SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY</b>	CONCORDE '1' Mohammad Huneidi .. in <b>ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI</b> Shows: 12:15, 6:30, 10:30 CONCORDE '2' <b>MAVERICK</b> Shows: 2:15, 8:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Michael Keaton .. in <b>DESPERATE MEASURES</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Robert Redford .. in <b>THE HORSE WHISPERER</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Watch out for the new play

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.





Sri Lanka's new sprint queen Damayanthi Dharsha gestures and shows her two gold medals 22 December as she returned to Colombo 22 December from the Asian Games in Bangkok ending a 47-year medal drought for the Indian Ocean island republic. Dharsha won the women's 200m, after entering the event in the last minute following the pull out of controversial sprinter Susanthika Jayasinghe, and the 400m gold (AFP photo)

## OCA in medal quandary as doping claims more athletes

BANGKOK (AFP) — The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) is deciding how to react after two more athletes failed doping tests, officials said on Tuesday.

Two United Arab Emirates (UAE) athletes including Fakrudin Taher, who won the silver in the 60-kilogramme kumite karate here, have been disqualified after failing drug tests, OCA Secretary General Randhir Singh told AFP.

Taher and unplaced 400-metre hurdler Abdullah Sabt tested positive for the banned stimulant ephedrine on Sunday, he said.

Randhir Singh said Taher had been stripped of his medal, but it was unclear who would be the new silver medalist as the karate event awarded two bronzes to the losers of the semi-finals instead of holding a third-place playoff.

"We have to decide on how to allocate the medal. The sports committee of the OCA will be handling it," he said. "We are going to have to give joint medals, because they can't give a single one now."

Randhir Singh said the two bronze medalists would likely receive the silver, while the bronzes would go to the next runners up.

Syria's Adnan Laoundi and Nepal's Sambar-Bahadu Gole were the bronze medalists. In the classification rounds, Laoundi beat P. Ramasamy of Malaysia, while Gole beat Thailand's Chiewchanprechakul.

With its silver confiscated, the UAE is left with only one bronze from the Bangkok Asian Games, which ended on Sunday.

The two disqualifications bring to four the total number of athletes who failed doping tests at the Games, said by observers to be one of the cleanest international sports events in recent years.

Two weightlifters, Jaber Rashid Al Ajmi of Kuwait and Jordan's Ayed Jassar Khawaldeh, failed tests.

"The Games were very successful because we only had four cases," Randhir Singh said on Tuesday.

He said a programme needed to be set up to educate Asian athletes and Olympic committees further on the use of drugs.

"Many of them don't realise and the coaches don't realise. We want to educate them further to see that this doesn't happen."

## Mitchell heads USOC probe of Salt Lake allegations

NEW YORK (AP) — Hoping to calm jittery sponsors and avoid future mistakes, Northern Ireland peace negotiator and former U.S. Senate leader George Mitchell was selected Tuesday to head a U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) investigation of bribery allegations in Salt Lake's successful bid for the 2002 Winter Games.

Mitchell, who helped broker the peace accord in Northern Ireland and at one time was considered for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, will head a five-member panel that will start work next week. He expects to report to the USOC by the end of February.

Although the USOC inquiry lacks subpoena powers, Mitchell and committee president Bill Hybl said it would delve quickly into records supplied by the Salt Lake Organising Committee (SLOC) and cooperate with two other investigations already opened into the bribery case.

Any evidence of criminal wrongdoing would be turned over to prosecutors, Mitchell added. The Justice Department is conducting a preliminary review of the case to see if further investigation is warranted.

"I believe the Olympic movement holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Americans and people around the world," Mitchell said. "We intend to investigate what happened in the past and make recommendations to assure that the selection of U.S. candidate cities for future Olympics is fair and above reproach."

Hybl said Salt Lake had promised to cooperate in the investigation. He would not rule out penalties against organisers but said the USOC had no intention of taking over Salt Lake's Olympic preparations.

"These games will go on," he said. "They will be one of the most successful, if not the most successful, Winter Games ever."

Olympic Committee and the Salt Lake organizers launched their own inquiries earlier this month following a report that a scholarship fund run by the Utah bid committee had benefited the daughter of an IOC member from Cameroon.

SLOC President Frank Joklik said that six IOC relatives were among 13 recipients of the half-million dollar scholarship fund.

He initially defended the programme but later said it was improper, although he denied the scholarships were meant to buy votes.

The case quickly developed into the biggest ethics scandal in IOC history when Marc Hodler, a senior member from Switzerland and the man who oversees the committee's ethics rules, said there was widespread corruption in the voting for Olympic cities, including payoffs of up to \$5 million to agents who promised blocks of votes. One of those agents was an IOC member, Hodler said.

# Fawwaz warns of wide gap in sports administration

*'All those implicated in doping should be punished'*

By Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice-President Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz Tuesday warned that a wide gap between sports federations and athletes led to the dismal Jordanian showing at the recently concluded 13th Asian Games in Bangkok.

The senior sports official underlined that an immediate action plan was needed to rectify the situation as Jordan prepares to host the 9th Pan-Arab Games next summer.

"There has to be a significant change in our sports administration. Serious training and assessment is very important at this stage," he added.

Fawwaz made the comments in an interview with the Jordan Times following his return from Bangkok where he attended the meetings of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), held on the sidelines of the Asian Games.

Jordan again failed to win a gold medal at the Asian Games as the delegation returned with only five medals — including four by the taekwondo team — although the Kingdom took part in 11 sports.

Following the disclosure Tuesday that so far JD800,000 had already been spent in preparation for the Pan-Arab Games Fawwaz said: "It is true that a big amount of funds has been allocated and spent, however, it seems athletes are not serious enough. They only care about showing up at such competitions."

He, however, added that athletes were not the only ones to blame. "Apart from very few qualified coaches most trainers were failures as athletes. It is not surprising therefore that they have now become unskilled coaches, who fail to yield excellent athletes."

Regarding the fact that most Jordanian athletes failed to match their own personal records in Bangkok, Fawwaz said:

"The coaches should have prepared their players for competition on a higher level than what they are usually accustomed to. It is not only the training that matters on the Asian or international levels, it is tactics as well."

Fawwaz also lashed out at federations that do not cooperate closely with the JOC.

He cited the example of

weightlifting where he says the coach, player and officials knew of the fact of drug use by the country's top weightlifter.

Ayed Khawaldeh was the first athlete to test positive at the Bangkok Games after setting a new Arab record finishing seventh among fifteen participants in the 56-kilogramme class.

The OCA reprimanded the JOC after Khawaldeh was found to have taken the diuretic Triamterene in a random test following which he was immediately disqualified and expelled from the Games Village.

Fawwaz explained that had Khawaldeh admitted to have taken the drug only before the Games he would have escaped with a lighter punishment. However, his own disclosure that he had taken the drug throughout the summer meant that he had not used it to diuretic to lessen his weight but to conceal his use of another performance enhancing drug.

Fawwaz said Khawaldeh had tested positive with a very high percentage of the drug in his sample.

Khawaldeh also failed a second positive test before Jordanian delegation officials ordered his return home.

The OCA has since handed the matter to the sport's governing body to impose an international suspension which will bar him from the Pan-Arab Games.

"The federation, the officials his coach should all be penalised," Fawwaz, who is head of the Medical Committee of the Pan-Arab Games said.

The JOC officials said Jordan did not have the necessary means to screen athletes for possible drug use before a regional competition to avoid the possibility of positive tests. He added that the Bangkok Games lab had cost the organisers \$3 million.

Khawaldeh, who was the first Jordanian to win three bronze medals in one event at the 8th Pan-Arab Games in Beirut last summer, said his Chinese coach has instructed him to take the medicine during the West Asian Games in Tehran and during another championship in Algeria last year.

Only three other athletes — one from Kuwait and two from the UAE — out of over 6,700 athletes also failed drug tests at the Games

which has been regarded as one of the cleanest sports competitions ever (see separate story).

The Kingdom had 19 officials and 37 athletes at the Bangkok Games where 41 countries took part with only Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan missing.

The taekwondo team secured four medals including silver by Ibrahim Aqel, Ala' Kutkut, and Hussein Tahleh and bronze by Mohammad Farajeh. Mohammad Abu Khadijeh added a bronze in boxing.

In the past two Asian Games in Seoul '86 and Hiroshima '94 Jordan's sole medals were also achieved through taekwondo with a total of three silver and five bronze medals.

Describing the Asian Games as an "invaluable chance to assess our teams and pinpoint our location on the map of Asian sports" the JOC and the Ministry of Culture and Youth are now expected to assess the results obtained as Jordan prepares for the Pan-Arab Games in Amman and the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Although the best athletes were enlisted through a screening process in each sport, apart from taekwondo, the rest of the sports produced below average results especially in athletics and swimming where athletes' finishing times did not even match their own records.

Here's a brief look at Jordan's participation:

In athletics, all participants failed to match or better their own personal bests.

In the high jump, Fakhreddin Fuad, a gold medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, could only clear 210 centimetres although his record stands at 222.

Mohammad Abdul Baqi, who had set a Jordanian triple jump record of 15.53 metres during a recent training camp in Qatar, failed in five of six tries managing only 15.32 metres.

Tareq Najjar also had disappointing results in the discus failing in four of his attempts and only managing 51.48 compared to own personal best of 52.60 metres.

Mohammad Shaman and Mohammad Mutari were eliminated from the 800 metres. Mutari came short of his local time and finished the event with a time of

1:55.20 while Shaman finished with a time of 1:55.22.

Mutari had earlier competed in the 1,500 metres finishing with a time of 3:59.30 short of his own 3:47.9.

In the 400 metres, Shaman also came short of his own best time of 48.28 finishing last with a time of 49.64.

In swimming, Hana Majaj lagged far behind her local records finishing last in the 200-metre butterfly with a time of 2:40.85 while her local time was 2:26.00.

In the 100-metre butterfly, Pan-Arab Games bronze medalist Majaj also came in 18th with a time of 1:13.16, also off her local time.

In karate, Khalil Farran took sixth place alongside 12 competitors while teammate Butheina Mahsir, a Pan-Arab Games bronze medalist, finished fifth among nine players.

In boxing, Jordan's top boxer Abu Khadijeh settled for bronze, after having won three gold medals within a year — at the 8th Pan-Arab Games, the West Asian Games in Tehran and the 18th Arab Boxing Championships.

Basei Hindawi, bronze medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, and gold medalist Ayman Nadi failed to earn medals for Jordan as they competed alongside 180 athletes from 31 nations in the event.

In squash, the country's top player Mohammad Saeed lost to Pakistan's top player — Zarak Khan.

In taekwondo, Nancy Hindi, Zaha Talhouni, Luma Abu Judum, Ali Asmar, Alisar Matar, Mohammad Abdul Ruz and Ahlam Bino lost their bouts. The rest of their teammates secured four medals.

In judo, Mousa Khalaf, a silver medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, was eliminated, alongside Rami Dasouqi and Tawfiq Sulaiman.

In gymnastics, Jordan's Ahmad Abdo and Shadi Khouri obtained 45th and 47th places respectively.

In weightlifting, Awad Aboudi competed in the heavyweight over 105-kilogramme class managing overall eighth place beating Arab competitors from Kuwait, Syria and Lebanon.

The Kingdom was also easily eliminated in the bowling and shooting events.

## Germany replace France in Confederations Cup

ZURICH (AFP) — Germany will represent Europe in place of France at the Confederations Cup in Mexico next July, FIFA announced here on Tuesday.

The competition, originally scheduled for January, was then moved to late July and will now take place from July 24 to August 4, four days earlier than the first revised date.

FIFA had been keen for Germany, the reigning European champions, to compete in the tournament after European teams — including world champions France — complained about the dates.

Germany will figure in Group B at Guadalajara with Brazil, the United States and New Zealand. Group A, in Mexico City, comprises the host nation, Bolivia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

FIFA said Germany's late invitation arose out of the French Football Federation's problems with timing, the Confederations Cup clashing with domestic and European competitions.

Ironically it was Germany which had refused to play in the last Confederations Cup, held in Saudi Arabia in 1997.

## LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



### JD800,000 spent on Pan-Arab Games so far

AMMAN — Till today, JD800,000 has been spent to prepare for the Pan-Arab Games, which will be held in Amman Aug. 15-31, 1999. Games Financial Manager Mohammad Darwish said training camps, preparatory matches for teams, coaches' salaries, equipment and other expenditures had so far cost JD600,000, while JD200,000 went for maintenance of facilities. The Ministry of Culture and Youth has estimated expenditures for the event at JD4 million.

### Faisali players take a break

AMMAN — Al Faisali Club granted its soccer team a several-week holiday before it starts preparation for the 1999 soccer season which will include participation in Jericho Championship Feb. 28-March 9. Al Faisali recently played eight friendly matches in several of the Kingdom's governorates marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday and five matches against Palestinian teams in Palestinian territories.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES WILL BE HELD AT MOUNT NEBO on December 24th at 8:00 p.m. 1998 ALL ARE WELCOME!**

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI  
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### HONORARY DECEPTION

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

**NORTH**  
♠ K J 3  
♥ Q 8 5  
♦ 8 7 5 4 2  
♣ A 3

**EAST**  
♠ A 2  
♥ K J 9  
♦ J 9 6 3  
♣ Q 10 9 4 2

**WEST**  
♠ 8 7 5  
♥ Q 10 7 4  
♦ K 10  
♣ K 8 7 6

**SOUTH**  
♠ A Q 10 8 6 4  
♥ A 8 5  
♦ A Q  
♣ J 5

The bidding: WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass

4♠ Pass 5♠ Pass 6♠ Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♣

In a sense, South's hand was too good. One attractive card in particular blinded declarer to the winning line.

South was almost sure enough to select four spades for a rebid. However, with a six-loser hand a help-suit game try was probably the more accurate course to adopt, and North had ample to continue to game.

West led a heart and declarer

was looking at four possible losers — two hearts, one diamond and one club. Since the obvious way to try to avoid one of these was with a diamond finesse, declarer drew three rounds of trumps, ending in dummy, then led a diamond to the queen. That lost, the defenders cashed two heart tricks and in the fullness of time declarer had to concede a club for down one.

Give South a spot-card in diamonds instead of the queen and it would have been easier to find the fulfilling trick. Suppose that, after winning the first trick with the ace of hearts, declarer were to play ace and queen of diamonds immediately. West wins the king, the defense takes its two heart tricks and then attacks clubs, forcing declarer to win with the table's ace.

Declarer is in control, however. A diamond is ruffed high in the closed hand and, even though the suit splits 4-2, all is well. The ace of trumps is cashed, and a trump to the jack provides the entry for another diamond, again ruffed high, setting up a long card on the board.

Declarer crosses to the king of spades, in the process extracting the last of the defenders' lungs, and discards the losing club on the long diamond. Four spades bid and made.

## Moroccan star signs contract with Southampton

SOUTHAMPTON (AP) — Moroccan international striker Hassan Kachoul, who scored in the 3-1 victory that lifted Southampton off the foot of the Premier League on Saturday, has signed a 2 1/2 year contract by the club.

Hired from French runner up Metz on a three-month deal, Kachoul has impressed Saints manager Dave Jones who has now signed the 27-year-old forward until June 2001.

"Someone recommended him to me, and the next thing I know he turned up on our doorstep with two suitcases," Jones said on Tuesday.

"But he's really impressed me with his attitude and skill, and we are now working on improving his stamina levels to ensure he can last the full 90 minutes."

Kachoul will be unable to team up with veteran striker Mark Hughes in the two games on Saturday and Monday because the Welsh international has been ruled out through suspension.

The former Manchester United, Barcelona and Chelsea star appeared before a Football Association disciplinary committee on Tuesday and received the ban for accumulating 11 yellow cards this season.

## Copy Editors Wanted

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